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29th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 27 September 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Thomson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Maduro Moros (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is almost the end of the beginning of the annual debate in United Nations. Having listened to and evaluated positions on different world issues debated by the planet and all of humanity, the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the South American Bolivarian Republic, has received for the purposes of sharing with the Governments and the brotherly peoples of the world through the General Assembly a letter from the president of our Republic, Commander Hugo Chávez Frías. This letter contains a series of comments and reflections that are necessary and relevant for a democratic debate in our world and, above all, for the process of the growing empowerment of the peoples of the world and of transformation and necessary re-establishment of the United Nations as a multilateral system that has been with us for the last six or seven decades.

By your leave, Sir, I will read out and distribute to delegations the letter from Commander Hugo Chávez:

"Caracas, 26 September 2011

"I am writing these words to the United Nations General Assembly, that great forum where representatives of all the peoples of the world meet to express the reality of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to justice, equality and peace.

"Peace, peace, peace ... let us not look for peace in cemeteries, as Kant said with irony, but rather through the most zealous respect for international law. Unfortunately, the United Nations, throughout its history, instead of adding and multiplying efforts for peace among nations, has ended up by supporting the most ruthless injustices, sometimes by acts of commission, sometimes by acts of omission.

"We need to recall the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, which talks of saving future generations from the scourge of war. Those are just empty words; since 1945, the number of wars has continued to grow inexorably. Let us look once again at Libya in ruins, covered in blood, because of the powerful people in this world.

"I call on the Governments of the world to consider that since 11 September 2001, a new

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imperialist war was started, an unprecedented, permanent, perpetual war.

"We need to face the cruel reality of our world. We must make a list of our concerns stemming from the dangers and threats that are stalking us. Why is the United States the only country that sows military bases all over the world? What is it so afraid of that it must set aside staggering budgets for constantly increasing its military strength? Why has it unleashed so many wars, violating the sovereignty of other countries, which have the same rights over their futures? How can we can we use international law to counter its senseless ambition to militarily dominate the world in order to ensure access to the energy sources it needs to sustain its predatory consumerist model? Why does the United Nations do nothing to stop Washington?

"If we answer all of these questions with absolute sincerity, we would understand that the empire has crowned itself judge of the world, without anyone bestowing that responsibility on it and even though, therefore, the imperialist war is a threat to us all.

"Washington knows that a multipolar world is already an irreversible reality. Its strategy consists of halting the sustained rise of groups of emerging countries at any price, by promoting its major interests with its partners and followers in order to direct multi-polarity along the path that the empire wants. What is more, the goal is to reconfigure the world so that it sustains Yankee military hegemony. Humankind is facing a genuine threat of permanent war. As the case of Libya shows, the empire is ready, in any scenario, to create the political conditions for going to war. In the imperial worldview, Clausewitz's famous axiom is being reversed: politics is the continuation of war by other means.

"What is behind this new Armageddon? It is the absolute power of the military-financial leadership, destroying the world in its accumulation of more profits, a military-financial leadership that is in fact subordinate to a group of States. It should be borne in mind that war is financial capital's way of life: war that ruins most people and makes a few unimaginably rich. At this moment we have a profoundly serious threat to global peace: the unleashing of a new cycle of colonial wars, starting with Libya, with the cynical goal of breathing new life into the global capitalist system, whose current structural crisis has still in no way curbed its destructive, consumerist voraciousness. The case of Libya should alert us to the desire to practice a new imperial version of colonialism: military interventionism endorsed by the anti-democratic bodies of the United Nations and justified by prefabricated lies.

"Humankind is on the brink of an unimaginable catastrophe. The world is marching inexorably towards devastating ecocide; the terrifying consequences of global warming proclaim it, but the ideology of the environmental equivalents of Cortés and Pizarro, the early Spanish colonizers who destroyed part of the American continent — as the influential French thinker Edgar Morin has said — drives them to continue their depredations and destruction. The energy and food crises worsen, while capitalism still breaches every boundary with impunity.

"As we face this bleak prospect, our way is lighted by the great American scientist and two-time Nobel prize winner, Linus Pauling, who said:

> 'I believe that there is a greater power in the world than the evil power of military force, of nuclear bombs — there is the power of good, of morality, of humanitarianism. I believe in the power of the human spirit'.

Then let us mobilize all the power of the human spirit; it is time. We must unleash a great political counter-offensive to prevent the powers of darkness finding justification for going to war, so they can unleash the generalized global war with which they hope to save the West's capital. Venezuela calls for the establishment of a grand alliance against war and for peace, with the supreme goal of avoiding war at all costs. The warmongers and, especially, the military-financial leadership that sponsors and leads them must be defeated politically. Let us build the balanced universe envisioned by the liberator Simón Bolivar, the balance that, as he said,

cannot be found in war; the balance born out of peace.

"Let us take note and remember: Venezuela, along with the member countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, actively advocated for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the Libyan conflict, as did the African Union. Eventually, however, the logic of war decreed by the Security Council and made a reality by NATO, the armed wing of the Yankee empire, was imposed, the logic of war whose vanguard is the transnational media.

"Let us remember that the case of Libya was brought before the Security Council on the basis of intense propaganda on the part of the media, which lied in saying that the Libyan Air Force was bombing innocent civilians, not to mention the grotesque media setting of Tripoli's Green Square. This premeditated campaign of lies was used to justify hasty and irresponsible decisions by the Security Council, paving the way for NATO's policy of military regime change in Libya. It is worth asking: what became of the no-fly zone established by Security Council resolution 1973 (2011)? How could the more than 20,000 NATO missions flown against Libya, many of them aimed at bombing the Libyan people, not represent the denial of the no-fly zone? Once the Libyan Air Force was completely annihilated, the continued 'humanitarian' bombing showed that the West, through NATO, is imposing its interests on North Africa, turning Libya into a colonial protectorate.

"It is a joke to say that the United Nations imposed an arms embargo on Libya, when NATO itself brought in thousands of heavy weapons in support of a violent insurrection against that country's legitimate Government. The embargo, of course, was there only to prevent the Libyan Government from defending its sovereignty, exposing yet again the functioning of the cruel international system, under which the law applies only to the weak.

"What is the real reason for this military intervention? To recolonize Libya so as to take over its wealth. We have no doubt about that. Everything else is subordinate to that goal. No one colonizes innocently, as the great poet of Martinique, Aimé Césaire, rightly said in his extraordinary essay on colonialism. By the way, the residence of Venezuela's Ambassador in Tripoli was invaded and looted while the United Nations stayed mute, guarding a shameful silence.

"We demand the immediate cessation of the bombing on Libyan territory. We will also continue demanding that international law be respected in the case of this sister nation. We will not remain silent in the face of evil intentions to destroy the foundations that endow it with sense and reason. We therefore put this question to the Assembly: Why is the Libyan seat in the United Nations granted to the so called National Transitional Council while Palestine's admission is blocked by ignoring not only its legitimate aspiration, but also the will of the majority of the General Assembly? With all its strength and with the moral authority granted it by the will of the majority of the world's peoples, Venezuela hereby affirms its unconditional solidarity with the Palestinian people and its unlimited support for the Palestinian national cause, including, of course, the immediate admission of Palestine to the United Nations as a full Member State.

"And the same imperialist formula is being repeated in the case of Syria. Had not some of the Security Council's permanent members stood firm, it would all have ended with the Council authorizing NATO to fire its missiles and send its bombers against Syria. It is intolerable that the Powers of this world wish to arrogate to themselves the right to order legitimate, sovereign rulers to resign on the spot. Having succeeded in Libya, they wish to proceed in the same way against Syria. Such are the current asymmetries that exist on the international scene, and such are the abuses done to independent nations.

"It is not for us to pass judgement on Syria's domestic situation, first, because of the inherent complexity of any national reality, and secondly, because only the Syrian people can solve their problems and decide their fate by the right to self-determination of all peoples, an inalienable right in every sense. But that does not prevent us from believing that it is 100 times better to bet on the success of the broad national

dialogue for which President Basher Al-Assad has called than to impose sanctions and howl like hyenas for military intervention. We fully support the efforts of President Al-Assad to preserve the stability and unity of his country, which is being besieged by the West.

"Now let us turn to the Horn of Africa, where we will witness a heartbreaking example of the United Nations' historic failure. Most serious news agencies report that 20,000 to 29,000 children under the age of five have died in the last three months.

"The journalist Frida Modak, in her article 'To Die In Somalia' reveals the miserliness that afflicts the major international organizations, first among them the United Nations, a level of poverty worse than that ravaging the vast region of the Horn of Africa.

"In order to confront this situation, we need $1.4 billion, not to solve the problem but to address the emergency that Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia are going through. According to all information received, the next two months will be decisive if we are to prevent the death of more than 12 million people. That situation is most acute in Somalia.

"We must also ask ourselves how much money is being spent on sophisticated weapons to destroy Libya. Here is the answer of United States Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who says, 'This new war will cost us $500 million during its first week alone. Obviously, we do not have financing resources for that and we will end up cutting off other important domestic programs' funding'. According to Mr. Kucinich himself, the amount spent in northern Africa during the first three weeks to massacre the Libyan people could have been used to help the entire Horn of Africa, saving dozens of thousands of lives.

"The reasons behind the criminal military engagement in Libya are not humanitarian at all. They are based on the Malthusian postulate that there are simply too many people in the world and that they have to be eliminated by generating more hunger, destruction and uncertainty, thereby creating more financial profits.

"In this regard, it is frankly regrettable that the opening address of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly did not include an immediate appeal to solve the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, even as it asserted that the time had come to act on Syria. What criminal cynicism!

"We also call for an end to the shameful criminal blockade against our sister republic of Cuba, imposed by the United States empire for more than 50 years with gruesome cruelty against the heroic people of José Martí. By 2010, a total of 19 separate votes in the General Assembly articulated the universal demand that the United States cease its economic and trade blockade against Cuba.

"Since all arguments of international good sense have been exhausted, we have no choice but to believe that such aggravated cruelty against the Cuban Revolution is the result of imperial arrogance in the face of the dignity and courage shown by the defiant Cuban people in their sovereign decision to determine their own fate and fight for their happiness.

"In Venezuela, we believe that the time has come to demand that the United States not only immediately and unconditionally end the criminal blockade it has imposed against the Cuban people, but that it also release the five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters held hostage in the prisons of the empire solely for seeking to prevent illegal actions that terrorist groups are preparing against Cuba, under the protection of the Government of the United States.

"We wish to reiterate that it is impossible to ignore the crisis in the United Nations. In 2005, before this very General Assembly, we declared that the model of the United Nations was obsolete. Back then, we also said that it needed to be rebuilt from the ground up, and that the process could not be postponed.

"Since then, nothing has been done. The political will of the most powerful has prevailed. Of course, the United Nations, as it continues to function, docilely serves their interests. If its Secretary-General, along with the President of the International Criminal Court, takes part in an act of war, as is the case with Libya, then nothing can

be expected from the current structure of this Organization, and there is no longer time for reform. The United Nations does not accept any reform whatsoever. The illness within it is fatal.

"It is unbearable that there is a Security Council that turns its back, whenever it wants to, on the clamour of a majority of nations, deliberately refusing to acknowledge the will of the General Assembly. If the Security Council is a kind of club with privileged members, what can the General Assembly do? What is the scope of its operation when its members violate international law?

"Paraphrasing the liberator Simón Bolívar, who was referring specifically, in 1818, to the then newborn Yankee imperialism, we have had enough of laws being applied by the weak and abuses being committed by the strong. The peoples of the South cannot be the ones to respect international law, while the North violates, destroys and plunders us.

"If we do not commit ourselves once and for all to restructuring the United Nations, this Organization will definitively lose its last shred of credibility. Its crisis of legitimacy is accelerating toward a final implosion. In fact, that is what happened to its immediate predecessor: the League of Nations.

"A crucial and decisive first step towards restructuring the United Nations would be to eliminate the category of permanent member along with the right to veto in the Security Council. Likewise, the decision-making power of the General Assembly must be democratically maximized. A comprehensive review of the Charter of the United Nations is also urgently required, with the aim of drafting a new Charter.

"The future of a peaceful, multipolar world depends on the determination of the majority of the world's people to defend ourselves from the new colonialism and to achieve a balance in the universe that will be capable of neutralizing imperialism and its arrogance.

"This broad, generous, respectful and inclusive call is addressed to all the peoples of the world, but most especially to the emerging Powers of the South, which must courageously rise to the role they are being asked to play.

"From Latin America and the Caribbean, a powerful dynamic of regional alliances has emerged that seeks to create a democratic space that will be respectful of differences and eager to emphasize solidarity and complementarity in order to maximize that which unites us and resolve politically whatever divides us.

"This new regionalism allows for diversity and respects everyone's rhythms. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America is growing into an experimental vanguard of progressive and anti-imperialist Governments, seeking ways to break with the prevailing international order and strengthening the people's capacity to confront the de facto Powers. However, that does not prevent its members from contributing decisively and enthusiastically to the consolidation of the Union of South American Nations, a political bloc that federates 12 sovereign States of South America into what the liberator Simón Bolívar called 'a Nation of Republics'. Furthermore, the 33 countries that comprise Latin America and the Caribbean are currently preparing to take the historic step of establishing a single great regional entity that unites us all, without exception, through which we will be able to design policies that will ensure our well-being, our independence and our sovereignty, based on equality, solidarity, and reciprocity.

"Caracas, the capital of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, is proud to be able to host, on 2 and 3 December of this year, the summit of heads of State and Government that will definitely establish the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

"The people of Venezuela have placed their hopes in a broad alliance of regional assemblies of the South, such as the Union of South American Nations, the Caribbean Community, the Central American Integration System, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization, among other regional organizations, and specifically in interregional coordinating bodies of emerging Powers such as

the BRICS group — consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — which must become a focus of attention in coordination with the peoples of the South.

"I would like to conclude by recalling the great Venezuelan singer Ali Primera, whose poetic voice sent a message of life and revolution to our people. In one of his songs, he asks: what is man's struggle to achieve peace? And what kind of peace would it be, if we were to leave the world as it is? Today more than ever, the worst crime against peace would be to leave the world as it is; if we were to do so, the present and the future would be characterized by unending war. Bringing about peace, on the other hand, requires a radical rejection of everything that prevents humankind from being human."

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

Ms. Khar (Pakistan): I am honoured to be here today and to represent the brave and resilient people of Pakistan before the Assembly. As participants may know, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, was due to visit New York and address this House. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister could not come owing to the humanitarian disaster caused by the floods in Pakistan. Once again, I feel privileged to be able to deliver the remarks of the Prime Minister to the General Assembly.

I bring to Mr. Al-Nasser and to all the nations of the world assembled here salaam, peace and the greetings and good wishes of the people of Pakistan. We are delighted to be able to address the General Assembly under the leadership of Mr. Al-Nasser. This is an important session of the Assembly, and the State of Qatar is a truly deserving and able country for this occasion. The Pakistani people have intimate, brotherly relations with his great country, and I speak for my people in welcoming his presidential term. His election to this high office is as much a tribute to his outstanding qualities as it is to the high esteem in which his country is held in the comity of nations.

Why are we here? Other than the allure of New York City, why have we converged at the General Assembly? Pakistan is here because it believes in multilateralism. Each September we return to this great city and this grand stage so that we can restate and reaffirm the principles and values of multilateralism. It is and has been one of the abiding central tenets of our foreign policy. We are committed to the very idea of the United Nations.

To us, the idea is very simple. We can do more together than we can apart. We can solve complex problems by consensus rather than through unilateralism. Multilateral cooperation can help us deal with the spectrum of global challenges, old and new, in our interdependent world. As we grow more and more dependent on one another, the space for unilateralism and unidimensional answers to the most difficult questions shrinks. Those who are sceptical of the future of multilateralism are living in the past. The future, our collective global future, is, God willing, bright. It is the United Nations and multilateralism that will safeguard that future.

Pakistan believes in the promise of the United Nations: a world free from the scourge of war; a world governed by rules and norms of civility, of decency, of goodwill; creating a better future for the peoples of the world; and inter-State conduct premised on the respect for the immutable principles of the United Nations. We must ensure that the United Nations is the best representation of the aspirations of our peoples.

We must do better. There is far too much distance between those aspirations and the sometimes dark realities of our times. We are constantly struggling with difficult choices and cycles: expediency versus values, interests versus ideals. There is conflict, discord and death. Natural and man-made calamities spread fear and destitution among millions, and often exacerbate and expose already unacceptable levels of poverty and deprivation. We face these challenges in every country. We cannot afford to face them alone. The importance of togetherness and of our faith and collective commitment to the ideals, principles and values of the United Nations cannot be overstated.

Togetherness, or multilateralism, of course, does not mean uniformity or conformity. It does not mean falling in line. Instead, it means harmony, tolerance, respect for diversity and a pragmatic, cognitive realization that no one system, no single prescription, no one *raah*, or path, works for all. Each society, every culture offers a path for the march of mankind. Preconceived assumptions about the superiority of one way or the other must not be allowed to contaminate the spirit of the United Nations.

Pakistan's oldest spiritual traditions and most beloved poets and peers have taught us that there can be no progress where the mind is divorced from the heart. Faith in the United Nations is a manifestation of the best rational traditions and the most cherished traditions of idealism and believing in something. We believe in the United Nations. The spirit of the United Nations must permeate all our endeavours. The peoples of the world await the advent of the true age of the United Nations. We must reassert our promise to deliver it.

I would like to compliment the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, on his tireless efforts in bringing to bear the vast reservoir of goodwill, compassion and common humanity of Member States in successfully addressing a wide array of challenges.

On behalf of the people of Pakistan, I wish to convey our grateful thanks to the Secretary-General and the international community for their support and solidarity, expressed so generously in the wake of the devastating floods last year.

This year again, heavy monsoon rains have caused widespread flooding. Millions have been affected, with about 5.4 million people rendered homeless. Human and economic losses, as well as the pressing requirements of relief and rehabilitation, obliged us to seek international assistance. We again thank the international community for its support and solidarity.

The Pakistani people continue to consistently demonstrate their immense reservoir of courage, forbearance and generosity. God willing, we shall overcome this misfortune through the same fortitude and resilience that our people have been blessed with.

At this session of the General Assembly, Pakistan is seeking election to a seat on the Security Council. In soliciting the support of President Al-Nasser, I wish to assure him that we would discharge our responsibilities with utmost dedication to the high ideals and principles of the United Nations.

Pakistan attaches the highest importance to promoting the goals of peace, security and stability in the world. In our own region, we have relentlessly endeavoured to create an environment of shared prosperity and peace. A democratic, progressive and prosperous Pakistan embedded in a stable, secure and prosperous region guides the framework of our foreign policy and could yield enormous benefits not only for the peoples of our region but for those of the world as well.

We have reached out to our immediate neighbours with a sincere desire to join hands in bringing about durable peace and development through a win-win approach. Situated as we are on the crossroads of Central, South and West Asia, we realize the enormous opportunities that ensue from pursuing with diligence the vision of common development and cooperation.

I am happy to note that both Pakistan and India are now engaged in a substantive dialogue process that we in Pakistan hope will be uninterrupted and uninterruptible. We certainly intend to make that engagement fruitful and to premise it on the promise of a mutually rewarding enterprise that would enable us to make the best use of the complementarities that exist.

We look forward to resolving all outstanding issues, including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which is among the oldest on the agenda of the United Nations and the subject of several Security Council resolutions. A peaceful resolution that accords fully with the aspirations of the Kashmiris is indispensable for durable stability, as is the need to safeguard their fundamental human rights.

The reality of a nuclearized South Asia imposes both on Pakistan and on India the onerous responsibility to work together to create mutual confidence, avoid an arms race and enhance strategic stability. We look forward to moving in that direction in the dialogue process.

Pakistan is also firmly committed to promoting stability and peace in Afghanistan. We respect and support the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan for reconciliation and peace, under the leadership of President Karzai.

We strongly condemn the terror attacks in Kabul, in which many precious lives were lost. We also express our sympathy to our brothers and sisters and the leadership of Afghanistan on the tragic assassination of Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, former President and Chairman of the Afghan High Peace Council. Such cowardly attacks will never succeed in deterring our proud Afghan brothers and sisters from realizing the noble goals of reconciliation and peace.

Pakistan fully supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned inclusive process of reconciliation and peace in Afghanistan. We want to see Afghanistan as a united, independent and sovereign State. We urge all concerned to join the reconciliation process. We also call for a de-escalation and cessation of violence.

The road ahead for peace in Afghanistan and our region as a whole is full of challenges. The complexity of the situation and the ground dynamics need to be analysed objectively and carefully. Clarity and strategic coherence, especially among Afghanistan, the United States and Pakistan, are of the utmost importance. It is for that reason that we attach importance to the work of the Trilateral Core Group. We also attach considerable importance to the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission for Reconciliation and Peace.

It is only by charting a clear road map that we will be able to bring about the necessary operational policy coordination to achieve our shared goals and objectives. Given the volatility of the situation, it is perhaps understandable that there is a high level of anxiety and emotion. However, we must not lose sight of the goals. We must work together closely and as responsible partners in a cooperative manner, and not rush to judgements or question each other's intentions.

A cooperative endeavour, in full solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, is the only way of ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Pakistan is willing to do its best with international partners and, most notably, the Governments of Afghanistan and the United States, to acquit itself of that high responsibility at this defining moment in one of the most important struggles of our times.

Pakistan has always upheld the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to an independent homeland with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Here, I would like to reaffirm our principled position. President Mahmoud Abbas made an historic and memorable case for his people (see A/66/PV.19). We stand by him and the Palestinian people. We stand by our brothers and sisters, and we agree that the current situation is no longer sustainable. We support the quest of the State of Palestine for membership of the United Nations.

In North Africa and the Middle East, we have witnessed important developments. Pakistan believes that the aspirations of the people must be accommodated peacefully, without external interference and in a manner consistent with the principle of sovereignty, unity and the territorial integrity of States.

Very few countries have been ravaged by the monster of terrorism as brutally as Pakistan. We are keenly aware of the threat that terrorism poses to Pakistan, to Pakistan's neighbours and to the rest of the world. Some 30,000 innocent Pakistanis — men, women and children — have been killed. The ever-valiant Pakistani armed forces have defended Pakistan and the rest of the world, at the highest cost. Our troops have sacrificed 6,532 *shuhada*, or martyrs. Some 19,190 of our strongest, bravest and most honourable boys have suffered injuries. It does not stop there. We have seen 3,629 of our police and paramilitary personnel embrace *shahadat*, or martyrdom. Since 2002, 10,720 of those men and women of the police and paramilitary services have been injured.

The grieving mothers, daughters, sisters and wives of those brave men and women are a constant reminder of our need to be vigilant and to fight the menace of terrorism. Pakistan's most popular leader, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated in 2007. Numerous politicians have lost sons, brothers and fathers at the hands of terrorists. Our streets are filled with armed police posts. We cannot enter our parks, shopping centres, churches or mosques without being searched and frisked. Terrorists have attacked our military installations, the grave sites of our spiritual leaders, our minorities and the very idea of Pakistan. If I began recounting Pakistan's sacrifices and suffering, I would be here till next September. We do not take terrorism lightly. We cannot afford to. We have suffered far too much at its hands.

Our nation is united in its determination to eliminate the spectre of terrorism from our soil, our region and the world. It is important to enhance international cooperation to totally obliterate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Our resolve is inspired by Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the legendary poet philosopher, to whom Pakistan owes a debt of gratitude. Iqbal said:

> "The eagle does not fall from its soaring height
> If you have the will, there is nothing to fear from adversity"

Pakistan has the will. We do not fear adversity. It is Pakistan's firm determination not to allow any space on its territory for militants and terrorists. On the regional plane, we must all pledge that our respective territories will not be allowed to be used by terrorists against others.

The issue of organizing, financing, arming, supporting and abetting terrorist violence needs to be addressed seriously and effectively. Notable success against Al-Qaida and its affiliates has been registered in recent years. It is well known that, following the Tora Bora bombing and consequent dispersal of Al-Qaida, it was Pakistan's intelligence and security agencies that interdicted a large number of Al-Qaida operatives. Very recently, Yusuf Al-Mauritani, the chief operative of Al-Qaida, was arrested in a joint Inter-Service Intelligence and Central Intelligence Agency operation.

We must demonstrate complete unity in ranks, avoid any recrimination, build greater trust and, more important, bring about the requisite operational coordination in combating the menace. Otherwise, I am afraid that terrorists are the only ones who will gain. Eliminating terrorism is in our national interest. We believe that our success is critical to regional and global peace and security.

Despite our limited capacity and constraints, we have done all that we can towards realizing the vision of a bright future for our people and the peoples of Afghanistan and the region. We have actively advocated and worked for closer regional economic integration. We believe that, unless we prioritize development and create win-win scenarios in terms of mutually beneficial joint ventures in connectivity, infrastructure, energy and trade, we cannot succeed in changing the picture. We need to give hope and provide a silver lining to those who have not seen peace for three generations and have only taken up mercenarism and guns as a means of livelihood.

Pakistan's commitment to eliminating terror and militancy is irrevocable. We believe that action to that end warrants a comprehensive approach that deals not only with the violence, but also its root causes. That requires enhancing international cooperation in multiple domains.

Pakistan has reached out to all countries of the world to establish mechanisms and arrangements, including intelligence cooperation, mutual assistance in legal and criminal matters, and joint operations where required. We believe that is a global issue which needs to be addressed effectively.

Pakistan supports initiatives to strengthen the United Nations. However it is important not to start anything that could prove divisive or potentially unravel the essential pillars of the United Nations. The process of Security Council reform must be carried out in a manner to reinforce the confidence of the world's peoples in that body and enhance its credibility and effectiveness. Such reform must enjoy the full consensus of the international community and accord with the fundamental principle of sovereign equality.

I remain committed to the vision of Pakistan's martyred leader, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who reminded us time and again that selective morality is by definition, immoral, and that fundamental human values alone must guide our actions.

Pakistan attaches high importance to United Nations peacekeeping functions and is a major troop-contributor to United Nations peacekeeping. Pakistan has consistently been among the top United Nations peacekeeping contributors for many years. We have over 10,000 troops in the United Nations Blue Helmets.

We also attach importance to United Nations work in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Our collective endeavours in those fields would show more effective results if we could enhance security for all through non-selective and non-discriminatory approaches. Normative work must be premised on principles.

We applaud the work of the United Nations in multiple domains. The specialized organizations, bodies and institutions are veritable examples of accomplishments based on shared goals and broadened fields of cooperation. Pakistan played a leadership role in conceiving and piloting the One United Nations Initiative. That is a potentially vital actor in global development and aid effectiveness. Despite the Paris Declaration and its reaffirmation at Accra, we have a long way to go. The One United Nations Initiative in Pakistan has struggled to achieve the lofty goals that it set, but we continue to invest hope in its eventual success.

Of course, the most important kind of harmonization is the one that takes place between

people, between hearts and minds, between nations. We place immense importance on our ability to promote harmony and tolerance among and between societies, cultures, faiths and nations. We know the price to be paid when those values are breached, having lost the Governor of our most populous province, Salmaan Taseer, and our valiant Minister for Minority Affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti, to acts of violence perpetrated by extremists. For us, the process of harmony and tolerance begins at home, and we take it very seriously. We are committed and our resolve is strong.

At the international level, we are confident that the United Nations provides the best global forum, as it is fully equipped to enhance understanding and goodwill among all members of the international community. Respect for beliefs, cultures and traditions are the hallmark of civilized conduct. We are particularly concerned over campaigns that tend to stigmatize Islam and Muslims. Islam is a religion of peace. It is important that the international community celebrate our common humanity and unity in diversity.

The systemic fault lines in the global economic landscape have surfaced lately and remain a source of immense concern. The debt and financial crisis added another worrying dimension to the existing disparity between developed and developing countries and highlighted the need to promote holistic development and economic growth. That requires revisiting the fundamentals and readiness to equitably address the underlying issues.

As a democratic country committed firmly to the ideals, values and principles of the United Nations, Pakistan will continue to do its best for the cause of global peace and prosperity. Under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, the Pakistani nation is moving ahead, confident of itself and its enormous capabilities. As a vibrant democracy, we are in the process of accomplishing a historic societal transformation. The challenges our people have dealt with have empowered and emboldened us further.

We will remain unflinchingly democratic. We will defeat those that seek to terrorize us. We will empower women. We will protect the weak and the vulnerable in our midst, especially minorities. We will stand up for the weak and vulnerable abroad. We will support the human rights of Kashmiris. We will speak in support of the Palestinians. We will educate our children. We will protect our children. We will face any and all challenges with determination and faith. Most of all, we will be a peaceful and prosperous society. There will be challenges, but we will overcome each one of them.

We do not anticipate undertaking that alone. With our neighbours and our friends, we will undertake it all, in a spirit of togetherness and of harmony. We will forge ahead despite the darkness of our times in the spirit that helped to build this great institution. That spirit speaks to the very heart of Pakistan's identity — it is the spirit of the United Nations. Let us join hands and march forward, for the good of the peoples of our countries and for the good of the world.

I will conclude my statement with the words of Pakistan's founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which is the quintessential expression of Pakistan's foreign policy. Mr. Jinnah stated, in a radio broadcast of February 1948:

> "Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world, and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter."

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pak Kil Yon, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and head of delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Pak Kil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation*): First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. I am confident that his able leadership will lead this session to a successful result. My congratulations also go to the Republic of South Sudan on its admission to the United Nations.

This year marks the twentieth year of membership of the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea in the United Nations. Our country joined the United Nations as a result of its desire to defend world peace and achieve mankind's common prosperity, working together with all United Nations Members. Since that time, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has remained faithful to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as it had pledged.

However, given the present status of international relations, the logic of power and highhanded politics has become all the more obvious, thus negating the principle of sovereign equality, despite the efforts and desires of the United Nations Member States. A few countries are involved in interference in internal affairs and the use of force against sovereign States in an attempt to dominate regions where they feel they have strategic interests under the pretext of protecting civilians and defending peace.

Regrettably, the United Nations has been misused in this process. International law and order have been violated and undermined by the arbitrary and high-handed acts of some major Powers. Given that current reality Member States should reaffirm the principle of defending peace and sovereign equality as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and speed up the process of reform of the United Nations, including enhancing the power of the General Assembly.

A long time ago, the General Assembly adopted resolutions on dismantling the United Nations Command in Korea and putting an end to the United States blockade against Cuba, which have not been implemented so far. This is just a random example that highlights the urgent need to enhance the authority of the General Assembly. To enhance the authority of the General Assembly it is urgently necessary to put in place a mechanism whereby Security Council resolutions related to peace and security, such as those on sanctions and the use of force, are subject to the approval of the General Assembly before they take effect.

Two other areas where the prevailing logic of power in international relations can clearly be seen are the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. Though it is said that reform is intended to put an end to politicization, selectivity and double standards in dealing with human rights issues, there still remains the prevailing reality whereby specific countries are selected for discussion of their human rights situations, while other major human rights violators are simply passed over in silence, all in accordance with the political objectives and interests of the West and the criteria of Western values. It is our view that the reform process of the human rights bodies should be intensified, so as to enhance the system that seeks to ensure genuine freedoms and rights for the people of all countries, and respect for their diverse histories, cultures, ideas and systems.

Meanwhile, some progress has been made in the field of sustainable development, one of the three goals set by the United Nations for the last two decades following the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. However, we are still faced with tremendous challenges.

We consider that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in 2012 should take practical steps towards the creation of a peaceful environment for development, the establishment of fair international economic and trade relations, the removal of sanctions, the implementation of official development assistance commitments, the transfer of environmentally friendly technology and increased financial assistance to developing countries.

It is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to live free of the Israeli occupation and to create an independent State of their own. It is also an obligation of the international community to admit Palestine as a full-fledged United Nations Member State. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea recognized Palestine as a State in 1988 and we support its admission to the United Nations. We believe that the aspirations of the Palestine people will be translated into a reality.

Today in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a general campaign is on in full swing to build a powerful State, under the wise leadership of the great General Kim Jong Il. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is concentrating all its resources on economic development, with a main emphasis on significantly improving the people's livelihood. We are achieving unprecedented and remarkable success. Our economic development in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will make a meaningful contribution to the efforts of the international community to foster regional development and to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

In that context, a stable and peaceful environment is a vital prerequisite for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its people today in their struggle for economic development. To our regret, however, the Korean peninsula does not yet have with a lasting and stable peace mechanism. The national division imposed by outside forces and the fragile armistice that leaves us in a state of neither war nor peace have now been in place for more than half a century. That is the stark reality of the Korean peninsula.

Despite the unanimous aspirations and desires of all the people at home and abroad who want peace and stability, the arms build-up and nuclear war exercises continue to be staged one after another against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in and around the Korean peninsula. Because of that, there is a constant recurrence of a dangerous situation on the Korean peninsula, which is often driven to a brink of war.

The prevailing situation not only poses a grave threat to the sovereignty and security of our Republic but also obstructs the efforts of our people to achieve peaceful development. Had it not been for the Songun ideology implemented by the great leader of our people, General Kim Jong Il, and had it not been for our powerful war deterrent, the Korean peninsula would have been turned into a theatre of war scores of times and our peaceful economic development would have been unimaginable.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its stand to secure peace and stability and move towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through dialogue and negotiation. The present circumstances of the Korean peninsula require all parties concerned to seize the opportunity for dialogue and take courageous decisions to act boldly on solving the fundamental issues.

The continued existence of the tense situation on the Korean peninsula is attributable to the hostile relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, which give rise to mistrust and confrontation. As long as hostility exists between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, with the parties to the Military Armistice Agreement levelling guns at each other, mistrust and confrontation will not dissipate and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will not be possible.

It was with that in mind that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposed again last year to hold talks for replacing the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement. The signing of a peace agreement as part of implementing resolution 3390 (XXX), adopted at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly in 1975, would be the most effective confidence-building measure towards alleviating the mistrust between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and would further serve as a driving force for ensuring the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Denuclearization of the whole Korean peninsula was the last instruction given by the great leader of the Korean people, President Kim Il Sung. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula specified in the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 is a process of turning the whole Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone based on complete removal in a verifiable manner of the actual nuclear threat to the Korean peninsula from the outside.

The issue of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula originated, for all intents and purposes, from the hostile policy and nuclear war threats of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Such being the case, the United States is the main party that is responsible for and capable of removing the root cause of the problem. The nuclear issue would never have been raised at all, if the United States had refrained from deploying nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula and threatening the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear arms.

Under the present circumstances, in which the Korean peninsula stands at the crossroad of either a relaxation of tension or a continuation of the vicious cycle of aggravation of tension, the United States should boldly abandon its hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and move towards full-fledged dialogue, proceeding from its long-term strategic vision. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will make strenuous efforts in the future as well to establish a durable and lasting peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula and will continue to cooperate with all parties concerned for unconditional resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

Inter-Korean relations have been developing favourably on the Korean peninsula since the publication of the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration. However, it is extremely unfortunate that North-South relations have now been aggravated to their worst state ever, with a widespread atmosphere of warmongering and confrontation with fellow countrymen, after the current South Korean authorities took office. There is a serious problem behind all that, the issue of fundamental contradictions and antagonism in the approach towards the reunification of the Korean peninsula.

Different ideas and systems exist now in the North and the South of Korea. Given that reality, the choice of method of reunification is itself a vital issue that will lead either to national reunification or to national disaster. The North and the South of Korea, through the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration of 2000, recognized that there is common ground in the federal formula proposed by the North and the confederal one proposed by the South for reunification, and agreed to orient the reunification along this direction in the future.

That agreement between the North and the South enjoyed warm support and was welcomed by our fellow countrymen and the international community, including the United Nations. But the present South Korean authorities reneged on the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration on the agreed reunification method and came up with what they called the theory of unification through absorption, which presupposes the collapse of the other party, and thus put inter-Korean relations into a phase of touch-and-go confrontation and increased the danger of war with each passing day.

In view of the prevailing reality of the Korean peninsula, the so called unification through absorption is a road to war, whereas the federal formula is a road to peace. The federal formula is a realistic proposal for reunification premised on coexistence and the best possible method of reunification able to prevent war. It is also a reasonable proposal for reunification that accords with the interests of the region and the neighbouring countries, as it presupposes the neutrality of the reunified State.

If the present South Korean authorities truly want to see the relaxation of tensions in the Korean peninsula and an improvement in inter-Korean relations, they should abandon their confrontational attitude against peace and reunification and switch over to a policy of respecting and fully implementing the 15 June Joint Declaration and 4 October Declaration, agreed at the summit level between the North and the South.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will, in the future, further strengthen and develop friendly and cooperative relations with all United Nations Member States, in accordance with its foreign policy principles of independence, peace and friendship, and will do its level best to defend peace and security in the Korean peninsula and in the rest of the world and to promote joint development and the common prosperity of all humankind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Doru Romulus Costea, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Costea (Romania) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to convey my sincere congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. I wish him every success in his endeavours and assure him of the Romanian delegation's full support.

Clearly, the theme chosen for this year's general debate, "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means", is both wise and topical. Romania has a strong interest in the topic, given our long tradition of mediation, as well as the number of unresolved conflicts in our region. Some conflicts have persisted for years and even decades and remain unresolved. Other conflicts have erupted suddenly, scotching the hopes for a brighter future and for the development of entire regions.

In the current security environment, mediation and conflict prevention instruments are highly important, yet under-utilized. A strengthened legal foundation for mediation and strengthened mediation activities of the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations are necessary, as well as the increased involvement of Member States in mediation efforts.

We must continue at all times to be guided by the fact that mediation for peace and conflict-prevention at an early stage are much more beneficial than crisis management and peacekeeping. To that end, we urge the reporting and periodic evaluation of any and all conflict situations, anywhere in the world and without

regard to context, by the Security Council and by all United Nations Member States.

(*spoke in English*)

The protracted conflicts in Eastern Europe continue to require our undivided attention. We reiterate the importance of the international community's continued involvement with them with a view to achieving peaceful solutions within the existing regulatory frameworks. We continue to attach great importance to dialogue between the parties in order to achieve mutually acceptable solutions based on respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States within their internationally recognized borders.

In that context, we welcome the opening of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union (EU) following the resolution adopted in 2010 by the General Assembly (resolution 64/298), and reiterate the central role of the United Nations and the framework of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). Recent problems have yet to be overcome through cooperation, although the dialogue remains on track.

We support the Geneva talks co-chaired by the United Nations, the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Progress on the humanitarian situation should not be held hostage to political setbacks, and urgent solutions are thus necessary to address that situation.

With regard to Afghanistan, we are witnessing progress in the Afghan authorities' gradual takeover of responsibility in the fields of security, reconstruction and socio-economic development. We welcome the steps taken by the Afghan Administration for national reconciliation. We trust that a rigid framework with fixed time lines for the transition period is unnecessary. Instead, the transition process should be tailored according to the particular realities and conditions required for the normal functioning of Afghan society.

Romania considers that progress in Afghanistan also depends on the efforts of the authorities in Kabul and the continued commitment of the international community. In that context, we welcome the role and efforts of the United Nations, other international organizations and Member States and reaffirm Romania's commitment to building democratic institutions in Afghanistan.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the valiant women and men who serve the cause of peace worldwide. Many of them, including Romanians, have lost their lives or were wounded on mission. We extend our deepest gratitude and respect for their sacrifice.

Recently, important statements were issued on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Romania favours a sustainable peace in the Middle East, and our country strongly supports the principle of two States — Israel and Palestine — living together, side by side, in peace and security. The only viable solution that could be effectively applied to that case and form the basis of a global and sustainable peace would be through direct negotiations. Romania is chairing the Fourth Committee during this session, and we are ready to encourage, from that position as well, all diplomatic efforts aiming at achieving progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

This year's General Assembly session is taking place under the powerful image of the tremendous political transformations in North Africa and the Middle East. Romania warmly welcomes those transformations. What has become known by now as the Arab Spring recalls in our minds and hearts the events that took place more than 20 years ago in our part of the world. Twenty years later, we are proud of our accomplishments on the path of democracy-building. Yet we know, first hand, that the journey is difficult and sometimes daunting, with many challenges lying ahead, not the least among them is the fact that the political forces in those countries must remain focused on their goals of freedom, democracy and justice that inspired them at the very beginning.

Therefore, one of Romania's priorities is to assist the countries in transition in North Africa and the Middle East in their democratic quest. Romania is already supporting democratization in its proximate regions and beyond. Currently, most of our development assistance funds are dedicated to building democratic institutions, consolidating the rule of law and protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In July in Bucharest we convened an international workshop on electoral and political matters pertaining to democratic transition. The event was organized in partnership with the United Nations Development

Programme, the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations Secretariat in New York and the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania. The workshop was attended by over 40 participants from Egypt and Tunisia who represented public institutions involved in organizing elections, the media, civil society and academic circles and Romanian and international experts. The seminar focused on sharing experiences with first electoral cycles in post-authoritarian regimes as foundation[1] moments for new democratic societies through credible, transparent and free elections.

Romania believes that the political transformations occurring in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and elsewhere should be endorsed and supported by the United Nations with all available resources. It is our collective responsibility to see to it that the proper conditions for human dignity and prosperity are set up in all our countries and that progress in the quest for fundamental freedoms and equal rights for all human beings is supported. That is part of Romania's mandate as a newly elected member in the Human Rights Council, a mandate we intend to implement in a constructive, balanced and comprehensive manner.

Although human rights are fundamental rights, the current situation in the world is far from satisfactory. Human rights and democracy are universal values that require our constant attention and protection against any repressive actions. In that respect, the legitimate and peaceful demands by the people of North Africa and Middle East for respect for their human rights and liberty are emblematic.

We reaffirm our will to act in cooperation with partners to achieve a global and coherent approach towards the risks and threats to international peace and security, particularly those arising from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. The best way to reduce the risks of the use of nuclear arms and materials, in particular by non-State actors, is to irreversibly eliminate nuclear arsenals and apply a strict framework for non-proliferation. We support and call on all States to consider undertaking long-term responsible involvement in this area and to focus on global security interests above all.

We are all familiar with the current multilateral framework that governs non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. All treaties and conventions have proved their usefulness so far. Yet, more is needed so as to increase the effectively of their implementation and the degree to which their provisions are observed. We stand ready to work with others to achieve this key objective for the global security architecture.

Romania reiterates its commitment to continuing its active engagement in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Pursuing an open and transparent dialogue on the objectives and themes of the Conference during the current session is one of the main steps that will help guide our actions.

The Conference will be a unique occasion for the international community to place humanity on a path towards sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, and, in that context, to establish a clear vision of the green economy. Economic growth and the need to promote transition towards a green economy must be considered opportunities to make more with less, aiming for a higher standard of living and social equality for all.

Climate change should continue to be a mobilizing factor despite the obvious obstacles. We should not let differences and the high complexity of interests undermine our determination. The negotiations in Durban, based on the decisions of Cancún and the Copenhagen Accord, should pave the way towards a swift adoption of a post-Kyoto global regime.

A clear and present challenge is that, while we are trying to set the world on a path of sustainable and equitable growth, we have to cope with one of the most severe economic and financial crises of modern times. The crisis, which still wreaks havoc on international affairs, has revealed the vulnerabilities of our financial and economic systems, both national and international. It has become evident that the world financial system is not adapted to the realities of global competition. Indeed, the entire system of economic and financial governance needs to be revised, and budgets, including that of the United Nations, need to be kept under strict control.

In times of crisis, options are limited. We can dwell in endless debates on "what should have been done" or "what might have been". But this is not the time for such debates; rather, it is the time to act. As the President of the European Council said the other day in the Hall, "We act, supporting the forces of hope

and fighting the causes of worry" (See A/66/PV.15). We stand by this option. Reforms are needed that lead to the comprehensive observance of good governance principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the wise use of available resources. That is the only option. A country without equal and dignified citizens can never be rich.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Francisco Álvarez de Soto, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Álvarez de Soto (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the international community, first of all, to express the pleasure of the Government of the Republic of Panama at the election of His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

The delegation of Panama is gratified by the holding of the general debate in the presence of the Secretary-General and representatives of the different Member States, Observers and organizations. We would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session for his excellent work.

President Al-Nasser has invited us to focus this debate on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution. The importance of this theme invites us to deeply reflect on its multiple dimensions, given that mediation is an essential instrument in the preservation of international peace and security.

Panama is a multi-ethnic country where people of different races, cultures, creeds and languages coexist in harmony and freedom, and where love of representative democracy, independence and respect for the sovereignty, ideology and territorial integrity of all countries are inalienable specific qualities that define us as a nation.

In our view, and as a founding member of the United Nations, Panama will always advocate for international peace and security, the promotion of dialogue among Member States, the strengthening of multilateral dynamics and facilitating the mission of the United Nations. That is largely due to experiences accumulated during the course of the diplomatic history of our country. More than three decades ago, for a second and last time, the Security Council held an extraordinary session away from Headquarters, with the purpose of politically mediating the dispute over the sovereignty of Panama over its Canal and the territories adjacent to the Canal Zone, controlled at that time by the United States of America, which was the platform that launched the Panamanian cause onto the international stage.

It was the joint will and intervention of the members of this illustrious General Assembly, demonstrated in its historic resolution 31/143, of 1976, which to a great extent inspired the signing of the Treaties between Panama and the United States in 1977. Nowadays, the Panama Canal, fully under our sovereign authority, is one of the most important axes of our economic development, supervised by a Panamanian administration, for the benefit of all nations. Panamanians will always be grateful to the United Nations for this noble success of multilateralism.

In the 1980s, the Contadora Group was established in Panama as a mechanism for multilateral mediation. It forged a Latin American alliance committed to democracy, economic cooperation and regional security and led to the Esquipulas peace agreement — an overarching advance in the consolidation of peace in Central America. The Contadora Group was the predecessor of the Rio Group, which is today an important mechanism for consultation and coordination in Latin America.

When our democracy was restored in the early 1990s, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, we as a nation initiated sustained consultations among the principal actors of Government and civil society in order to strengthen our administrative institutions, secure the return of the Panama Canal to Panama, overcome asymmetries in our country, and identify strategies to accomplish our development priorities.

During the past two decades, our culture of dialogue has given us the skills necessary to transform our country into a democratic and dynamic society that is progressing at a steady pace under the current Administration of the President of the Republic, Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal.

As a result, Panama is now considered the second most competitive economy in Latin America, according to the World Economic Forum classification system, in

view of our first-class financial system, our ports, our high-quality multimodal logistics infrastructure and our efficient technology — all of this in an environment that is open to business and generates global interest in foreign direct investment.

Our robust prospects for economic growth and our effective management of public debt, in combination with continuous, adequate and careful financial discipline, have been the determining factors in our recently achieved investment grade with a stable outlook, according to the major rating agencies. Likewise, we have begun to implement an active cooperation agenda in the area of information exchange and fiscal transparency. We have adopted all of the measures suggested, which have enabled us to comply with the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in this respect. However, this journey to success has not been easy, and many future challenges remain.

I believe that all of those here today will take on the main challenges faced by the international community in the process of achieving a coherent restructuring of the world economy and the reform of its institutions and oversight mechanisms. Panama is fully aware of this need, and our international agenda requires us to participate actively in the major multilateral mechanisms and economic and commercial integration forums in the areas of investment, tourism and technology, for the benefit of our citizens. Panama believes that such efforts must be promoted without delay by the major economies if we truly wish to overcome the turbulence in international markets.

Our country also believes that to ensure a favourable economic climate, domestic conflicts must be prevented. This depends on, inter alia, the effectiveness of the democratic regime, public security, respect for human rights, the responsible management of natural resources, tolerance, access to health-care and sanitation services, the affordability of basic goods, good governance, and inclusive and balanced development.

We in Panama, after living for 21 years under a military dictatorship — until 1989 — have made a strong commitment to democracy as a means of peacefully resolving the disputes that arise in our society. The experiences suffered under that dictatorship have led us to speak out unequivocally, in bilateral and multilateral forums, in favour of the strengthening or re-establishment of the effectiveness of democratic institutions wherever necessary. This has led us to clearly express our position in defence of democracy in cases such as those involving Honduras, the failed coup attempt in Ecuador, and the Arab Spring, which brought the winds of freedom to that region of the world.

The duty to resolve disputes that give rise to international conflicts lies primarily with those States whose disagreements have generated the conflicts in question. Nevertheless, the United Nations, as the epicentre of global diplomacy, must increasingly perfect the art of mediation as a means of resolving international disputes. We can never forget that this is a fundamental principle of the Charter of the United Nations, enshrined in its Article 33 — a mandate that has resulted in many accomplishments around the world, where wisdom, mutual understanding and agreement have prevailed over aggression, hate and destruction.

Mediation and dialogue have formed the basis of the stand that Panama has taken in connection with conflicts that have a bearing on peace and international political stability. Allow me to point out in that respect that the Government of the Republic of Panama believes that the Palestinian people have the right to be recognized as a State, but that they must first resolve their differences with their neighbour Israel, which also has the right to peaceful and harmonious coexistence with Palestine and the other States of the region. There could be no better solution than one that emerges from direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority.

We also trust in the outcome of dialogue between the parties in the case of China. Panama, with full respect for the existing diplomatic truce, calls for greater participation by Taiwan in international forums and initiatives, in recognition of the fact that its people wish to contribute to the pursuit of global peace and well-being.

For that reason, and given the relevance of this important provision of international law, we invite the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to continue to promote and enhance the role of mediation as a viable strategy for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

However, for the United Nations system to continue its effective peace mediation activities, each

Member State must honour the commitments undertaken, so that the Organization can count on sufficient resources. This call for international cooperation is particularly relevant in these times of budgetary constraints in many countries, and given that aggressive competition for scarce resources is one of the primary causes of armed conflicts.

Panama is a country with a lengthy and notable history of peace and conciliation. In our opinion, the best option when faced with the threat of armed conflict is comprehensive, transparent and unconditional diplomatic dialogue between the parties.

We welcome the fact that in July 2011 the international community marked an important milestone along the path to a collective security architecture through the unanimous adoption of a resolution entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution" (resolution 65/283). That consensus represents the victory of reason over the absurd and harmful option of confrontation. The international community has seen clearly the major advantages of investing in a concerted effort to consolidate peace before it becomes necessary to contain the human tragedies resulting from violent conflicts, as we have witnessed and are witnessing in Somalia, for instance, where hunger, disease and destruction reign.

Human history has taught us that hunger, poverty, ignorance, injustice and social inequality give rise to the greatest threats to peace and security. If we, the States Members of the United Nations, remain determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we must opt for proactively ensuring a peace that is based not on action taken in reaction to political or military acts of aggression, but on faith in and guarantees of universal and equal human rights in all corners of the world.

As we believe in the valuable role that the United Nations should play, Panama is very proud to share with this Assembly the fact that the Government of President Ricardo Martinelli proposed the creation of a United Nations Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim of strengthening coordination and dialogue among regional agencies, in particular the 16 United Nations bodies already established in Panama. The national Government will finance the project, which will be a unique model of best practices in implementing sustainable development in Latin America and the world.

In the past decade, our country's privileged geographic position and the logistical infrastructure that Panama City offers has attracted various humanitarian aid organizations. That has also encouraged Panama to promote the construction of a regional humanitarian assistance logistics centre for the Americas. The regional centre will have the necessary agreements to expedite the entry and exit of humanitarian aid in order to help in the event of natural or other disasters, such as occurred last year in Haiti, where the international humanitarian agenda is still very necessary.

With such projects, we reiterate our commitment to the multilateral system and to the United Nations Organization, and show that, as small lower-middle income developing countries, we also provide international cooperation, even in such times of economic difficulty for the large economies.

Nor does Panama wish to miss the opportunity before the Assembly to call for reflection on the environmental, political and social challenges that all our societies face and that we must overcome, once again, through dialogue and cooperation among States in an effort to address those global challenges.

Without a doubt, one of those great challenges is that posed by climate change and its effects. Climate change is a priority of my country's foreign policy at the environmental level. We are committed to all efforts aimed at strengthening international environmental organizations and to the struggle to find joint solutions to the causes and effects of that phenomenon.

As part of our support to the Organization's own initiatives and for the benefit of the international community, we will host the meeting of the ad hoc working groups of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, soon to take place in Durban, South Africa. Those working groups will meet in Panama from 1 to 7 October in order to advance the modalities for a second commitment period of carbon emission reductions by developed countries and for stabilization of the global temperature so as to make progress in fully implementing the Framework Convention through long-term cooperation mechanisms.

Panama hopes that the meeting will serve as a bridge between the results obtained in the Mexico meeting and those that may emerge in the one that will take place in South Africa, since it is necessary to set clear, transparent and ambitious goals. Also, the political will of developed countries in the matter must be reaffirmed, as they have the primary responsibility under the Convention.

In conclusion, as the Secretary-General rightly stated in his opening address to the general debate:

> "Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty and advancing economic growth — those are one and the same fight." (*A/66/PV.11, p. 1*)

That is why Panama, once again and before the General Assembly, renews its commitment to the community of nations to work for a world where war, sectarian hate, discrimination, intolerance and destruction waged under different flags and creeds that, without any justification, generate only poverty and misery, may finally be replaced by the dialogue, negotiation, cooperation and friendship stemming from differences that, on the contrary, have always been a source of wealth and well-being for the peoples of the world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Espen Barth Eide, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Mr. Eide (Norway): Since we last met here, major changes have swept through the world. We have been witnessing the Arab Spring. People are standing up against authoritarian rule and demanding respect for the fundamental values that underpin this very institution. Autocrats who have failed to offer the prospect of a better life in freedom and dignity have been overthrown. Now, popular calls for reform in Syria have been met with a violent response. We urge the Syrian regime to respect the people's legitimate demand for democracy and fundamental human rights.

In July, a new flag rose in Juba as we celebrated the birth of a new State. Last Friday, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan addressed us from this podium as the leader of our newest Member State (see A/66/PV.19). That became possible thanks, first and foremost, to the vision and will of the people and leaders of the Sudan and what is now the Republic of South Sudan. However, it would not have been possible without the active support of the international community. That demonstrates the importance of mediation and the settlement of disputes through peaceful means.

Yet, we know that peace is fragile. The international community must coordinate its assistance and align it with the priorities of the South Sudanese Government. Outstanding issues must be settled through negotiations. We must contribute to laying the foundation for two viable States, so that they can both live in peace.

In Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, the United Nations has once again proved its worth by addressing some of the most challenging situations in the world. The resolve shown by the Security Council on Libya has reconfirmed its pivotal role in global governance and international security — the role that Member States bestowed on it through the United Nations Charter. There are times when there is no alternative to the use of force. When the Security Council acts, it is up to us — the Member States — to put its decisions into practice. Norway's active participation in the military campaign in Libya was, first and foremost, an expression of our belief in a United Nations-led world order and in the principle of the responsibility to protect.

The response to Libya was also a landmark in terms of international justice. For the very first time, a unanimous Security Council chose to refer possible crimes against humanity to the International Criminal Court. Combating impunity and promoting the rule of law and fundamental human rights are key to the prevention of conflict and the protection of civilians.

Promoting and strengthening human rights and gender equality are a common responsibility. Failing to adhere to universally agreed principles in that area is simply not acceptable. Investment in and empowerment of girls and women so that they can participate fully in the political and economic lives of States are also essential for economic growth and prosperity. There is fundamental evidence that States that fail on that account and continue repressive and discriminating gender policies will remain poor.

Last year, we reconfirmed our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. We agreed to accelerate our efforts. Last week, we received new evidence of dramatic and positive breakthroughs in our quest to reduce child mortality and maternal deaths. Strong political leadership, new partnerships and

innovative ways of working have brought real progress. The Secretary-General's global initiative "Every Woman and Every Child" has been instrumental in this respect. But further progress must not be taken for granted. Norway will continue to focus on women's rights and promoting the role of women in development. We will strongly oppose any efforts to reverse progress. We must maintain our resolve to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have proven to be a formidable tool for improving the lives of millions of people. Yet much remains to be done. There are vast untapped resources within many of the countries that are struggling to achieve the MDGs. Broadening the tax base, making tax collection more effective, halting illegal capital flows and fighting corruption are all measures that must be fully used in the fight against poverty. Getting that right will also improve the social contract in countries emerging from poverty or conflict. This is a responsibility that lies firmly with individual States.

With the climate conference in Durban only two months away, we must all play our part in making it a success. Implementation of the Cancun Agreements is crucial. The Green Climate Fund must be made operational. Durban should provide a roadmap that can bridge the gap between Kyoto and a new and more ambitious climate regime that includes all major emitters.

Today, 1.4 billion people lack access to affordable and reliable electric power supplies. We must combat climate change while promoting development. The Secretary-General's call for sustainable Energy for All is therefore highly welcome. Together with partner countries, Norway will launch a new energy initiative this autumn. The purpose is to boost sustainable energy generation and accelerate change towards energy efficiency. New funding will promote incentives for the energy sector in partner countries. Such incentives will in turn attract fresh capital for energy projects. We are determined to ensure concrete progress in Rio on the access-to-energy agenda.

Now, 20 years after the United Nations first Conference on Sustainable Development, the nations of the world must renew the partnership for sustainable development. Civil society and the private sector are crucial in this partnership. Norway is committed to a successful outcome of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Back in 1947, Norway voted in favour of the establishment of two States in the former mandate of Palestine in this Assembly. In 1949, we also heeded the call in resolution 181 (II) to give sympathetic consideration to an application by either State for admission to membership in the United Nations. We voted in favour of admitting Israel as a Member State. We based our decision at that time on the declarations and explanations provided by the Israeli delegation. Israel had persuasively explained why recognition and membership should not await resolution of the outstanding issues regarding borders, refugees, Jerusalem, and peace with neighbouring countries. When it admitted Israel as a Member State, this Assembly referred to those declarations and explanations.

Since then, Norwegian policy has been based on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Norway has consistently stood by Israel and its inherent right to self-defence in accordance with international law. We have also supported the Palestinian right to statehood and the building of the Palestinian Authority.

One of the main issues before this session of the General Assembly is the Palestinian quest for recognition. It is legitimate for the Palestinian people to turn to the United Nations under the current circumstances. This is neither incompatible with a negotiation process, nor an expression of unilateralism. Norway welcomes the call by the Quartet for negotiations on a comprehensive agreement on the outstanding final status issues to be completed within a year.

However, the situation on the ground is changing in several ways. A few days ago, the donor support group to the Palestinian Authority affirmed the success of local institution-building. The performance of Palestinian public institutions was scrutinized by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations. Their joint conclusion was that the Palestinians are fully capable of running a State.

On Friday President Abbas confirmed his commitment to resolving final status issues through negotiations. He also assured us of the Palestinian Authority's commitment to complying with the United

Nations Charter, relevant United Nations resolutions, democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

The main obstacle to full institution-building remains the occupation. Measures taken under the latter are changing the shape of the territory in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in ways that undermine negotiations and may soon render the two-State vision physically unattainable. The Security Council, the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice have all rejected the legality of such unilateral changes.

Both the Palestinians' readiness for statehood and the declarations and commitments they have made should be acknowledged. Norway looks forward to welcoming Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations.

It is vital that we continue to improve and strengthen the United Nations, so that it can serve us effectively in times of change. We, the Member States, have not ensured sufficiently wide-ranging reforms. We have not equipped the United Nations with the resources needed to carry out the mandates we adopt. We define noble objectives, only to undercut them in the budgeting process. We continue to ask the United Nations to do more with less. If that is what we want, we must give the Secretary-General greater flexibility.

At times, the vision of a United Nations that delivers as one is undermined by our own interference and insistence on pet projects, earmarking of funds and cross-cutting, awkward and, on occasion, internally conflicting financial reporting requirements. Fragmentation does not begin at the United Nations. It is a reflection of the priorities and actions of Member States.

Before I conclude, let me make one last remark. We deeply regret that this podium has once again been abused to promote extreme views and unfounded allegations. This serves only to incite conflict rather than to bridge differences. We will not give up the authority of our presence in this Hall, but will rather confront such attitudes from this podium. The purpose of the general debate is to draw attention to current challenges, express and share our views and lay the basis for constructive dialogue.

In a rapidly changing world, the United Nations must be able to adapt to new challenges, new actors and new geopolitical realities. As the Secretary-General reminded us yesterday, with power comes responsibility. After all, the United Nations is only as good as the results it delivers. We are not judged by our words, but by our actions.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Lucy Mungoma, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zambia.

Ms. Mungoma (Zambia): I wish, first of all, instance to extend my sincere congratulations to the President on his election as President of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In a similar vein, I thank His Excellency Joseph Deiss for his leadership of the sixty-fifth session. I also take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his reappointment as Secretary-General.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a warm and hearty welcome to the community of nations to the Republic of South Sudan following its independence on 9 July. We commend both the Governments of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan for the smooth transition during the handover and takeover of power. Zambia encourages the two countries to resolve the outstanding issues between them amicably and to work towards maintaining peaceful relations, as that is the only way to achieve economic and social development.

The theme for the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means", is indeed a pertinent one, considering the various conflicts across the globe that threaten international peace and security. The recent upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East not only present a new dimension to politics in that region but also highlight the need for mediation to avert the outbreak of fighting.

My delegation wishes to underscore the need for the international community to resolve conflicts on the African continent, including the situation in Libya, within the frameworks established by the African Union. We believe that local solutions have a higher prospect of being respected and accepted by all parties to the conflict.

In this regard, Zambia aligns itself with the mediation efforts put in place by the African Union and supports the Roadmap for the Resolution of the Crisis in Libya endorsed by the African Union heads of State and Government at their seventeenth Summit held in

Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, this year. With regard to Libya, Zambia shares the relief of the Libyan people in ridding themselves of a leader who committed egregious atrocities against his people.

We must, however, express serious concern about new atrocities being committed against black people in that country — both citizens and migrants from African countries. We call on this body to send a strong message that it will not only pursue perpetrators of such atrocities as vigorously as it did Al-Qadhafi but also undertake to investigate all allegations thoroughly. It would be tragic if, in the euphoria of celebrating the ousting of Al-Qadhafi, the United Nations turned a blind eye to atrocities still being committed.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues to be a major concern to international peace and security. We understand the frustrations of the Palestinian people over the long negotiations, which have completely stalled in recent years. In that regard, I wish to reaffirm that Zambia recognizes the Palestinian State, with pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital. In a similar vein, Zambia recognizes the State of Israel and its right to live in peace with its Palestinian neighbour.

The drought situation in the Horn of Africa presents a humanitarian emergency that threatens the lives of 12 million people. While erratic rainfall in past years is the main cause of the drought, the prevalent political instability and violence in Somalia has hampered that country's ability to effectively respond to the crisis. Zambia has pledged to donate several metric tons of various food items and cash from the Government and the private sector.

The need to address the political instability and violence in Somalia continues to be urgent. We therefore call upon the United Nations to implement the recommendations of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, in which he called for the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission there.

Exactly one week ago, on 20 September, general elections took place in my country. On Friday, three days later, the fifth and newest President of the country, Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata, was inaugurated. The incumbent President graciously conceded and handed over power. It was smooth and peaceful. It was a triumph for democracy in my country. Zambia strongly believes in the rule of law and is concerned at trends towards unconstitutional changes of Government — trends that in some cases receive the active support of powerful countries in the international community.

The political stability that Zambia has and continues to enjoy has had a positive impact on the economic development of the country. Over the past decade real gross domestic product growth has averaged 5.4 per cent. While that growth has reflected effective macroeconomic management and good copper prices, it has also been built on the foundation of Zambia's stable political environment and improved record of governance. In 2011, we expect to consolidate that strong performance with growth now projected to be above 7 per cent, second only to the projected growth rates of 9.2 per cent for developing Asia and significantly above the projected 5.5 per cent growth rate for sub-Saharan Africa.

Those economic trends notwithstanding, Zambia still faces the challenge of translating its economic growth into a significant reduction in poverty and a general improvement in the living standards of its citizenry. It is our intention for the benefits of economic growth to be broadly shared by the population at large. We hope to achieve that by continuing to strengthen our governance institutions, maintaining peace and stability and ensuring that we remain open to the opportunities that global trade and the exchange of ideas and experiences offer to a developing economy.

The country's economic development agenda is guided by the National Vision, under which Zambia aspires to be a prosperous middle-income country by 2030. The national agenda has been operationalized through five-year national development plans. Currently the country is operating under its Sixth National Development Plan, under the theme "Sustained economic growth and poverty reduction". With these achievements, Zambia is on course to achieve five of the eight targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2011.

In four years the MDG target date will be upon us. While Zambia has made notable progress towards achieving the 2015 MDG targets, particularly in terms of increased access to education, reduced maternal, infant and under-5 mortality rates and child nutrition, those achievements risk being reversed, pushing the country off track, owing to the multifaceted negative impacts of the world economic recession, unfulfilled

commitments and ever diminishing levels of financial assistance from cooperation partners. Under the circumstances, many developing countries are unlikely to meet the MDG targets. It is therefore important not only that every effort should be made to assist countries stay on track but that we start planning for a post-2015 MDG framework.

Beyond the challenges posed by infectious diseases, Zambia is also affected by the emerging global trend of non-communicable diseases. The socio-demographic and technological transition that goes with urbanization and industrialization has resulted in an increase in non-communicable diseases in our country. I would therefore like to commend President Al-Nasser for hosting the High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. My delegation is, nevertheless, cautious that while focusing on non-communicable diseases, resources meant for infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, should be secured, so that the gains already achieved in these areas are not lost.

Allow me to express Zambia's gratitude to the Secretary-General for organizing the High-level Meeting on addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication on 20 September 2011. There is no doubt that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is the least supported of the three Rio Conventions, the others being the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is in that light that the convening of the High-level Meeting, as a means of raising awareness about desertification, land degradation and drought at a high level, is most welcome. There is clearly a need for concerted efforts on the part of all Member States to raise the profile of the Desertification Convention to the level of the other two.

Zambia views desertification and land degradation as a major economic, social and environmental problem that requires immediate attention. It is in that regard that my country's sixth national development plan, for 2011 to 2015, has endeavoured to mainstream environmental management in general and sustainable land management in particular. The challenge now is for Zambia to mobilize adequate and predictable financial resources to implement the programmes contained in the plan. The mobilization of resources for implementing programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought is an obligation shared by all Member States, including those unaffected by desertification, as is spelled out in the Convention, in Agenda 21 and in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, among others.

We therefore call for the judicious implementation of the outcome decisions of the recently held High-level Meeting on desertification and land degradation. We also call on all States to ensure that adequate financial resources are available for programmes aimed at combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

Turning to the topical subject of climate change, whose adverse effects are responsible for exacerbating desertification, land degradation and drought, the need to put in place a new and dynamic international regime for climate change has never been so urgent. The adverse effects of climate change are being borne disproportionately by poor countries such as my own. The effects of climate change are real and are already affecting our agriculture, water, and infrastructure, to mention only some sectors. Yet, as we have repeatedly said, it is rich countries that are responsible for the historic build-up of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, the problem that has brought about global warming and climate change. The developed world should therefore show leadership when it comes to agreeing on a new international regime on climate change.

Zambia looks forward to the forthcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Durban, South Africa, in December. We are confident that these talks will build on the positive outcome of the last Conference, held in Cancún, last December. Africa, which is hosting such talks for the first time, is determined to ensure a successful outcome. Time is running out and we can no longer afford the luxury of inconclusive talks each year. We call on all parties to commit to making progress and ensuring that agreement is reached on all outstanding issues so as to pave the way for a new climate change regime. We also call for the immediate operationalization of all funds established so far under the Climate Change Convention, thereby making financial resources accessible to countries in need.

The High-level Meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was a timely reminder to all nations to continue to promote the rights of all people regardless of race or creed as equal citizens of the world. Zambia recommits itself to the just cause of fighting against any form of racism or racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

With the year 2012 very much in sight, Zambia hopes for a successful conclusion to negotiations on the arms trade treaty. A strong and robust treaty will help foster regional and international peace and security. Zambia also supports an arms trade treaty that encompasses all conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and their ammunition; components of weapons; dual-use equipment with a military end-use; and arms production equipment and technology. Furthermore, Zambia advocates an arms trade treaty with a broad scope that includes landmines and conventional weapons already covered by international weapon-specific agreements, as well as technical support.

Last Friday the President of Sierra Leone, in his capacity as Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State on Security Council reform, reminded the Assembly of the need to hasten negotiations on this important issue. Zambia aligns itself with that statement and sentiment. It is a fact that Africa is now one of the largest regions represented in the United Nations, with 54 members, the same number as Asia. It is also a fact that three-quarters of the issues on the Security Council's agenda are African issues.

Unfortunately, it is also a fact that Africa is the only continent with no representation in the permanent-membership category of the Council. In addition, Africa is underrepresented in the non-permanent-member category. Africa's request for two permanent seats, with all the rights and obligations of current members, and for two additional non-permanent seats, is a matter of justice and the right to have an equal say in the decision-making on issues that concern our continent. It is also a matter of democracy. Above all, it is about the dignity of a people and the dignity of a continent.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alexandru Cujba, chair of the delegation of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova): It is a great honour and privilege to take part in the general debate and to represent my country on this rostrum at a significant juncture in Moldova's modern history, the recent celebration of the twentieth anniversary of its independence and 20 years of its membership in the United Nations, which we will mark in a few months. These interrelated and complementary events constitute an excellent opportunity to once again express our genuine attachment to the founding principles of the Organization, and our sincere appreciation for the support and assistance the international community has given my country during this time.

On behalf of my delegation, I have the pleasure to extend congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on assuming his high and responsible position, and to join previous speakers in expressing our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss for his excellent management and the competence he displayed during his presidency of the Assembly. I would also like to reiterate our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his reappointment to a second term as Secretary-General, to convey our deep appreciation for his strenuous efforts and activity on behalf of the international community and to wish him success in continuing his noble mission.

The beginning of a new decade of the twenty-first century has been marked by major changes, sincere aspirations and high hopes in many parts of our planet. We wholeheartedly welcome the Republic of South Sudan's declaration of independence and its entry into the United Nations as the 193rd Member State. We have witnessed the genuine desire of young people for democratic reforms and human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice. Peoples in the Mediterranean region and in North Africa and the Middle East have set out firmly along the road of democracy, launching the Arab Spring. In that regard, we recall the events that changed Moldova and launched our country on a new, more democratic track in 2009.

In this time of change and historical upheaval, we note the transition of Libya to a new phase in its

political development, as stated expressively in the Assembly last week by the Chairman of the National Transitional Council Executive Office of Libya (see A/66/PV.22), whom the Republic of Moldova, like many other delegations, supported as Libya's representative in the General Assembly. The role of the United Nations in supporting Libya's transition to democracy in the wake of the downfall of the former regime has been incremental. We express our satisfaction at the Security Council's approval of the creation of a mission to assist the transitional authorities and the Libyan people during the critical post-conflict phase.

We have also learned that natural calamities hit nations indiscriminately. In order to overcome the consequences of ecological disasters, such as the great east Japan earthquake, the Fukushima nuclear accident, the great flooding in Pakistan and the severe drought and hunger in the Horn of Africa, requires the common efforts of both developed and developing States. The international community has the great task of strengthening its humanitarian and disaster response capabilities.

Faced by different challenges, it is commendable to have a joint platform of concerted actions, managed by the United Nations. Poverty, conflicts, climate change, economic and financial issues, migration, pandemics, terrorism, international crime and other crises affecting humankind cannot be countered individually, but only by means of global strategies. The United Nations is a unique tool in addressing and overcoming them.

The United Nations should consolidate its central role in world affairs, and, consequently, enhance its multilateral and universal potential by making the Organization stronger and more representative, efficient and able to promptly react to major challenges. A reformed Organization must pragmatically adapt to new realities and strengthen its influence, in strict accordance with the United Nations Charter. The most appropriate methods of communication, consultation and cooperation during the reform process should be developed, in close interaction with other actors, such as the private sector, civil society and academics, who play a more visible role in shaping the modern world.

The greatest incentive for economic growth and security is a balanced and equitable global trade system, for which the international community has been struggling in complex negotiations since the Doha Round in 2001. While talks on the issue continue, discrepancies and ruptures in our economies make it difficult to stand against the waves of the economic and financial crises. It is hardly possible that countries, especially developing ones, remain immune to the globalized economic downturn. While we are required to implement drastic austerity measures, access to markets is vital for our economies. That is one of my country's priorities. Our Government is working hard towards the extension and diversification of market outlets in cooperation with its partners, primarily in Europe. We rely on openness, a constructive approach and fair play in market relations as our best allies for win-win solutions in global trade.

The Republic of Moldova stands committed to its human rights agenda. Last year, my country ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, in a sustained effort to contribute to the development and implementation of international standards in the fields of human rights and the rule of law.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Moldova has taken an active part in the Council's deliberations and activities, with the aim of building up a strong and legitimate human rights body. This year, Member States underwent the complex process of the Council's review. Although not all the concerns of Member States were accommodated for a far-reaching and more ambitious outcome of the review, we should remain committed to fulfilling the balanced and objective agenda of the Council, while its membership is expected to comply with resolution 60/251 to uphold the highest standards in the field of human rights and to fully cooperate with the Council's mechanisms.

The Republic of Moldova remains committed to that principle. In approximately two weeks, my country will engage in an intensive review by the United Nations Human Rights Council under the universal periodic review mechanism, involving not only the Government but also civil society and other national stakeholders. We intend to proceed in that exercise with genuine openness, objectivity and a constructive approach.

The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York on 11 September 2001

reminded us once again of the great losses, the needed vigilance and the imperative to multiply our efforts in combating the terrible scourge of terrorism.

As a State party to all the universal legal instruments on the prevention of terrorist acts, the Republic of Moldova condemns terrorism and extremism in all their aspects, and welcomes the achievements of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We advocate the earliest conclusion of the negotiations of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, the convening of a United Nations conference and the strengthening of all efforts on combating terrorism at the national, regional and global levels. To contribute to that end, the Republic of Moldova is currently hosting a regional event on preventing and countering the financing of terrorism in South-East European States.

Let me now refer to one of the most important security issues faced by the Republic of Moldova — the Transnistrian conflict. From the outset, I would like to reconfirm that the Government of the Republic of Moldova remains fully committed to the goal of achieving a political, comprehensive and viable solution to the issue, which should lead to the reintegration of my country.

During the past five years, in referring to the Transnistrian issue, we have always made the same appeal. Moldova calls for the unconditional resumption of the negotiations on the political settlement of the conflict in the "5+2" format. I am happy to announce that, exactly five days ago, at the 5+2 consultations round in Moscow, that decision was finally taken. We express our gratitude to the Russian Federation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Ukraine, the European Union and the United States — the members of the 5+2 negotiations format — for their efforts in reaching that result. However, the resumption of the official negotiations was never seen as a goal in itself. We are fully aware that the most difficult part of resolving the conflict is still ahead.

On this occasion, I would like to reiterate some basic elements of the Moldovan approach towards the problem. A viable and comprehensive political solution can be based only on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, within its internationally recognized borders. The central question on the agenda of the five plus two negotiations should be the special status of the Transnistrian region within Moldova. On the one hand, that special status should ensure full respect of the needs, rights and freedoms of the local population. On the other hand, it should provide for the functional integration of the region with the rest of the country.

Over the past year, our efforts have been focused on mobilizing internal resources and international support to advance the conflict resolution process. In that regard, we continue to promote confidence-building measures between both banks of the Nistru River. Our current list of priorities includes the restoration of fully-fledged rail communications throughout the Transnistrian region, in accordance with international standards. Another important objective is the restoration of landline phone connections to allow people from the Transnistrian region to communicate freely with their relatives and friends in the rest of Moldova.

The main beneficiaries of such measures are, obviously, the population and the business community. The solutions are on the table. Our message for the leadership in Tiraspol is clear — abandon the policy of self-isolation and let us think together about practical and transparent solutions that would make people's lives much easier.

Let me also refer to some unresolved issues that need further attention. We are concerned about the situation of Latin-script schools in the Transnistrian region, which remain under constant pressure from local authorities. Children should never become hostages of political disagreements. In the same context, we emphasize the need to improve the human rights situation in the region, in particular to resolve the case of Mr. Ilie Cazac, who has been abusively imprisoned in Tiraspol, in order to secure his immediate and unconditional release.

We need to reflect on the future of the existing peacekeeping arrangements in Moldova. I would like to underline the fact that Moldova has been at peace for the past 19 years. Therefore, what we really need is a peace consolidation, not peacekeeping, exercise. That requires the transformation of the existing, old-fashioned military mechanism into a multinational civilian mission operating under a relevant international mandate and focusing on confidence-building activities.

We should not avoid discussions about the presence of foreign military forces that are stationed on

Moldovan soil without the consent of the host country, in breach of the Moldovan Constitution and relevant international commitments. We are confident that an early completion of the withdrawal of foreign munitions stocks and the armed forces guarding them from the territory of the Republic of Moldova will positively influence the process of settling the Transnistrian problem.

As in the case of other conflicts, the Transnistrian settlement process cannot advance to its final goal without wide international support, particularly from the mediators and observers. It is our strong belief that genuine mediation based on shared objectives, joint efforts and good faith is an essential factor in that regard.

We fully concur with the President's focus on the peaceful settlement of disputes, and his assessment that peaceful settlements, including those brokered through mediation efforts, provide the most cost-effective and long-lasting solutions. We will actively engage in further debate on the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes, with a view to developing and consolidating the role of the General Assembly as the world's leading peacemaker.

Moldova's advancement on the path to European integration, the primary goal of which is the overall modernization of the country, remains the absolute priority of the domestic and external policies of the Republic of Moldova. The Government has initiated a series of deep reforms to ensure the rule of law, the independence of justice and a functional market economy where businesses and foreign investments can find a proper place to grow. Those have proven to be complex, lengthy and sometimes painful processes, but they are absolutely indispensable for further development.

Moldova's proactive attitude and determination in promoting and implementing reforms has ensured a more intense and expanded political dialogue between the European Union (EU) and Moldova. We have made significant progress in negotiating an association agreement with the European Union by opening a structured dialogue on human rights and fully engaging in efforts to meet the conditions established during the visa liberalization dialogue. We are ready to launch negotiations on creating a broad and comprehensive free trade area with the European Union.

The European perspective continues to be the EU's most effective tool in promoting dynamic and consistent reforms in neighbouring countries. We are confident that the promotion of democratic values, prosperity, stability and security in Europe will lay the foundation for the future EU agenda. That projection of soft power will be possible only if it is accompanied by an extension of EU borders. In that context, we hope that the Warsaw Eastern Partnership Summit will make an important contribution to strengthening EU relations with partner countries, developing its messages and leaving the door open for those Eastern European neighbours that are able to meet the accession criteria in the foreseeable future.

Over the past 20 years, my country has achieved significant positive developments in the field of internal affairs. Still, much remains to be done in the process of carrying out democratic and socio-economic reforms, the main objective of which is to consolidate the Republic of Moldova as a sovereign, independent and reintegrated European State.

In that regard, we further count on the support of the United Nations and its Member states in advancing the political and economic development of my country, resolving the Transnistrian conflict, speeding up the withdrawal of foreign military forces and implementing our development priorities.

In conclusion, I would like to reconfirm the commitment of the Republic of Moldova to the ideals and goals of the United Nations, and its readiness to further cooperate broadly by engaging in concrete actions to bring those ideas and aspirations to life.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Francisco Carrión-Mena, chair of the delegation of Ecuador.

Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): In June 2009, humankind was still witnessing with perplexity the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and its devastating consequences on employment, hunger, poverty, trade, foreign direct investment, credit, tourism, remittances and health and education. At that time, my country, Ecuador, felt a moral obligation to participate, through its head of State, in the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, convened by the then-President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann.

On that occasion, the President of the Republic of Ecuador emphasized that the global financial debacle, which, it goes without saying, originated in the main financial markets of the North, was a symptom of crisis in a system in which the speculative-financial economy took precedence over the real economy. In other words, that system entailed waiting for money to create more money and stability of its own accord, instead of stimulating the production of goods and services to meet the needs of human beings.

For Ecuador, the gravity of the crisis alone should have marked a shift towards a stronger role for the United Nations in global economic governance, with a view to overhauling the international financial system and democratizing international relations by establishing a new world economic order.

Unfortunately, with the exception of a scant few cosmetic changes in the governance of the Bretton Woods institutions, the paradoxical multi-million-dollar bailout of the some of the sectors responsible for the crisis and a fragile mechanism to follow up on the commitments contained in the Outcome of the 2009 Conference (resolution 63/303, annex), nothing has changed. The world continues to await some sign of financial and monetary regulation and coordination that would ensure economic stability, access to credit, full and productive employment, trade financing, debt sustainability, social safety nets and, of course, a true global alliance that would protect and promote development to benefit our people, which is the sole objective of our efforts.

In its current state, the United Nations has been unable to rise to the challenges stemming from global economic instability, which have been exacerbated by this new stage in the 2009 financial crisis. That is why Ecuador is aggressively and resolutely promoting the creation of a new regional financial architecture capable of mitigating the adverse consequences affecting our economies as a result of their involvement in the international financial system.

In that regard, and without abandoning the pursuit of comprehensive reforms of the global financial and economic system, my country has suggested an approach, while taking into account the political, economic and social circumstances of each region, involving the adoption of regional monetary agreements that include a semi-flexible exchange rate regime and a common reserve fund so as to create a truly regional exchange rate regime and a regional currency.

In the case of Latin America, this proposal had its origins in Latin American forums through the creation of the Bank of the South. Its main aim is to fund multinational development projects and to bolster local and regional currencies linked to a common reserve fund for Latin America, which would enable us to deal with the crisis and prevent billions of dollars from our region being paradoxically deposited into the banks of developed countries. In the same way, this fund is complemented by a regional payment system, which has started to work through the Unified Regional Payment Clearing System, with excellent results to date. This system is leading the way towards a common physical currency in our region.

These regional initiatives can, and should be, integrated into a regional integration framework that extends beyond the economic and financial spheres. Such is the case with the Union of South American Nations, the headquarters and secretariat of which is located in our capital, Quito, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America — Peoples' Trade Agreement. My country stresses that these regional responses should be considered as complementing the urgent global measures required for better understanding and cooperation among regions.

At the same time, Ecuador urgently calls for a comprehensive reform of the world economic and financial system, including measures such as the creation of an economic coordination council and an independent mechanism to restructure and solve the problem of sovereign debt, which, among other proposals, should be discussed in a follow-up meeting to the 2009 conference.

However, apart from the economic and financial crisis, the crisis of multilateralism has also been reflected in the lack of a timely and suitable response by the United Nations to the political crises that have occurred, in particular in the Middle East. These have once again demonstrated the urgent need to conclude the long-delayed process of a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. This reform of one of the main organs of the United Nations should be primarily aimed at democratizing its decision-making mechanisms, guaranteeing full respect for the principle of equitable geographic distribution, including regional

representation, improving the Council's working methods and strengthening the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. All of this would provide the Council with the necessary legitimacy, effectiveness and representativeness to implement its mandates.

At the sixty-fifth session, Ecuador took over the chairmanship of the Special Committee on Decolonization with the conviction that, starting in 2011, which marked the beginning of the third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, we need new strategies that will lead, in the near future, to the decolonization of those territories that are still on the Committee's list.

Ecuador recognizes that peaceful means of solving disputes are the only legitimate mechanisms capable of guaranteeing sustainable and lasting peace for peoples. Among these is mediation, the central theme proposed by the President of the Assembly for the sixty-sixth session. Imposing solutions by force will never perpetuate peace — quite the opposite. We have witnessed the failure of these methods, which leads to war. We have suffered the failure of these wars. My country condemns abusive interpretations of Security Council resolutions, which systematically lead to more violence, bloodshed and human rights violations and which do not foster friendly relations among countries.

Ecuador's position with regard to the Middle East has as its founding principle our full adherence to the standards and principles of international law and strict compliance with United Nations resolutions. Forty-three years after having accepted the partition of Palestine into two States, on 24 December 2010 the Government of Ecuador, in a gesture of historic justice, recognized Palestine as a free and independent State, within its 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. My country therefore gave its full support to accepting Palestine's request to become a full State Member of the United Nations, as formally requested by the Palestinian President a few days ago. We also support all initiatives directed towards consolidating lasting peace, to benefit not only Palestine and Israel, but the entire region. This is a historic time for the United Nations, and Ecuador hopes that the Organization will rise to the occasion.

Concerning our region, Ecuador once again firmly condemns the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and demands the immediate and unconditional lifting of all unilateral measures imposed in an extraterritorial fashion by that country against our sister Caribbean nation. The blockade has inflicted serious economic, social and even humanitarian suffering on the population.

With regard to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, 20 years after the adoption of the international principles and instruments that set a new course for international relations, we are now reaching a watershed moment. Through it, we will be able to take stock of the implementation, both in the past and over the coming decades, of these principles and instruments. This would enable renewed political commitment to sustainable development, which will require action on the three pillars, which we define as the economic, social and environmental areas.

In order to implement the elements pending from the Rio conventions, Ecuador believes that we should, first, comply with commitments to reduce greenhouse gases in order to stabilize the temperature at levels that will enable us to restore balance to the planet while upholding the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities and equity; secondly, insist on the transfer of the new and additional financial resources promised by developed countries, considering the huge efforts that we developing countries are making in facing global threats; thirdly, remember that sustainability is not just an environmental question, but a shift in the relationships between capital, labour, nature and politics; fourthly, fix terms for technology transfers that will enable developing countries to make progress in capacity-building and in finding options in their pursuit of sustainable development; and fifthly, draft international instruments in the field of sustainable development in order to achieve equality, not just with regard to a green economy or a strengthened institutional framework, but also in order to include development in the comprehensive approach to improving quality of life, with adequate links between the three pillars to which I have referred — what we in Ecuador call "living well".

Four years ago, here in the Hall, my country made an unequivocal gesture of its commitment to the fight against the global challenge of climate change and the promotion of sustainable development. Indeed, in 2007, Ecuador presented to the world the forward-

looking Yasuní ITT initiative, an innovative and revolutionary idea. Under the initiative, the State of Ecuador committed to leaving 856 million barrels of oil underground indefinitely under the Yasuní National Park, thereby preventing the emission of 407 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere that would have been produced by the burning of these fossil fuels. All this was conceived as a swap in compensation for the estimated value of 50 per cent of the revenue that the exploitation of those resources would generate.

The Yasuní-ITT initiative, known today throughout the world, represents a concrete, effective measure for combating climate change and preserving the rich biodiversity of the area, along with its water, the rights of indigenous people living in the park and nature itself. By foregoing the right to exploit the oil reserves that lie beneath the Yasuní National Park and the economic resources that would be required to develop them, Ecuador hopes that the international community will contribute at least half of what the country would have received in profit, acting under the principle of co-responsibility on the part of countries that have historically been most responsible for climate change.

In a parallel event that took place here at the United Nations on 23 September with the support of the Secretary-General and the President, President Rafael Correa reminded the international community about the Yasuní-ITT initiative. The proposal has been enthusiastically received by countries, organizations, citizens, visionaries and leaders from around the world, adding up to significant support from both individuals and the private sector. That response has allowed Ecuador to broaden its initiative in a manner that will transform the governance of public resources at the global level. For example, we have begun to shape the concept of net avoided emissions, which President Correa introduced last year at the Cancún Climate Change Conference. That and the Yasuní-ITT initiative are two visionary proposals from a developing oil-producing nation of the South as a contribution to global challenges in the area of sustainable development.

Throughout this session, Ecuador will continue to defend with particular emphasis the right to development, the human right to water, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of women, girls and boys, the rights of people with disabilities, the rights of older adult men and women, the rights of migrant workers and their families and the rights of all vulnerable members of society.

For this reason, my country reiterates its concern about, and rejects, legislation adopted by certain States whose application leads to measures or practices that restrict the full exercise of migrant workers' human rights and fundamental freedoms. By the same token, we reaffirm that even as they exercise their sovereign right to implement such measures to control their borders, States have the obligation to guarantee the human rights of migrant workers and should promote measures that favour family unification and the protection of minors. States also have the responsibility to strengthen laws that punish any act of violence against migrant workers, particularly hate crimes that foment discrimination based on ethnic, racial or religious differences, as well as crimes against migrant workers that are committed with racist or xenophobic motives.

Ecuador is a peaceful land that espouses universal disarmament and condemns the development and use of weapons of mass destruction. For that reason, we place great importance on disarmament and international security, and note with concern the shrinking space for enforcing agreements in those areas.

The international community has not produced a single instrument through which the nuclear States pledge to refrain from using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries during the process aimed at destroying all such arms. It would seem that within the Conference on Disarmament the only interest and concern is to advance within the framework of nuclear proliferation, downgrading or, even worse, marginalizing all possibility of progress in the realm of nuclear disarmament. For that reason, my country supports the ongoing negotiation process within the Conference on Disarmament, which includes all pending matters.

As a proponent of universal disarmament, peace and sustainable development in harmony with nature, and as a signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the world's first nuclear-free region, Ecuador sincerely hopes that the pending aspects regarding the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East will be resolved.

My country wishes to express its full support for initiatives aimed at establishing transparency in the area of conventional weapons and for combating illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, including landmines and cluster bombs. We also support measures taken within the context of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We look forward to the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, whose outcome document should be an objective, predictable and non-discriminatory instrument.

Since 1953, Ecuador has been part of the great United Nations undertaking to maintain peace and security across the world. We have increasingly contributed to United Nations armed forces for peacekeeping missions in various countries. We are currently participating in Haiti, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, the Central African Republic and the Sudan.

Since 2004, we have participated in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti as part of the Chilean-Ecuadoran company of engineers that is helping to build new infrastructure for that country's development, with due recognition from the authorities and the local populace.

Ecuador foresees increasing its participation in peacekeeping operations, but our intentions go beyond that. As a troop-contributing country, we wish to increase the number of units and armed forces personnel taking part in such operations. We have made great efforts to show our commitment to joining the international community in its struggle to ensure that regions experiencing the greatest upheaval can resolve their differences and achieve the peace that is so necessary.

Let us not be deceived — global multilateralism is in deep crisis. The United Nations system has not adequately responded to the convulsive moment through which we are living. Climate change, the Palestinian question, the crisis in Libya and investment in development are just a few examples that illustrate its ineffectiveness. Solutions to the great problems of our planet are no longer reached within these walls. The most powerful countries of the world rely on other forums, exclusionary and anti-democratic ones, to decide for everyone else. If we do not act today on those and other urgent themes, such as the reform of the international monetary and economic systems as well as that of certain United Nations bodies, there will be no point in debating ways to restore the role of this world body in global governance. It is up to us to resolve this grave dilemma.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jim McLay, chair of the delegation of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): As we say in Maori, to all peoples and to all voices, greetings, greetings, greetings to all.

I speak at the end of a period of intense United Nations dialogue and engagement. This year's general debate provides unparalleled opportunities to reaffirm the unique multilateral role of the United Nations. And there has been much to debate. The events set in motion by a single Tunisian street vendor have transformed much of the Middle East and North Africa. People have displayed extraordinary courage in claiming their rights and freedoms. The transition from dictatorship to democracy will not be easy; it will not be quick; but it must be achieved.

For others, the struggle continues. We still look for change in Yemen; we still look for change in Syria. Other challenges are highlighted by this debate. We heard from the President of South Africa and others how the global community must move swiftly to avert humanitarian disaster in the Horn of Africa.

We heard from the President of Nigeria how terror networks threaten international peace and security, and from the President of Tanzania about growing piracy on Africa's eastern coast, from Somalia to Mozambique. We heard calls from the Indonesian Foreign Minister for bold measures to avert a renewed global financial crisis, and we heard from the President of Brazil about the challenge of empowering women to participate in political decision-making.

As this debate has demonstrated, much more remains to be done. Lives have also been wrenched by natural disasters in many countries, including my own. On 22 February 2011, we experienced what my Prime Minister called New Zealand's darkest day. An earthquake struck Christchurch, our second-largest city. A total of 181 people were killed, a loss we share with 15 other countries whose citizens also died. We were humbled by the support we received, and, once again, I thank those who gave that help.

Despite that disaster and the literally thousands of aftershocks that have followed, New Zealanders remain resilient and optimistic. Christchurch is being rebuilt. Our economy is bouncing back and the country is returning to normal, not least by currently hosting the Rugby World Cup, a celebration of a game we love, in the country we love.

Despite some cause for economic optimism, the events of just the past week suggest that the world still faces what we have long feared: a second and even more disastrous decline into a double-dip recession. We do not relish the prospect of being dragged into another recession that is not of our own making. We caution others larger than ourselves against repeating the mistakes of the 1930s, when autarkic protectionism only deepened the Depression and led to war.

Instead, a successful conclusion of the Doha Round is one of the keys to prosperity, particularly for those of the global South. The February Christchurch earthquake was followed by the devastation wrought on our close friend and neighbour Japan. I reiterate our heartfelt sympathy to Japan, so steadfast in its support for New Zealand in our time of need. Those disasters, and others elsewhere, reinforced the importance of effective disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

New Zealand will work with the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and international agencies so that the lessons learned from Christchurch are shared with others so that those in regions as vulnerable as ours can be better prepared. Indeed, in those regions, disaster preparedness is no desktop exercise; it is a matter of survival.

Likewise, for our Pacific neighbours, another high risk, climate change, is no abstract threat, confined to thousands of pages of reports and esoteric debate; it is a fundamental question of existence. For the Pacific, climate change is a grave and present threat to livelihoods, security and well-being.

The Secretary-General experienced those challenges first-hand when he visited several Pacific States, including one post-conflict society, and another whose people see, on a daily basis, the dangers of rising oceans. He experienced real vulnerability when he saw that his hotel room, in addition to the towels and the telephone, was equipped with a lifejacket. And he saw the impact of rising oceans on the viability and survival of many communities when his plane had to be "wheels up" from the country's airport — its major link with the world — before the tide came in.

Much more of that, and whole populations will be on the move, as they will be in other regions of the world as well, and that will have with implications for regional and international stability and security. Faced with that, it is self-evident that all relevant international forums, including the Security Council, must play their part in addressing the challenge. That means taking urgent and effective action on emissions reduction. It means strengthening adaptation in developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable. And it means acknowledging and planning for the security implications before they become threats to regional and international security.

This year's Durban meeting must set us on the road to full implementation of the Cancun agreements. New Zealand is committed, both through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations and its active assistance in the Pacific and elsewhere, to integrate adaptation and mitigation measures into its development activities.

New Zealand also initiated the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases. Supported by more than 30 countries, the Alliance seeks to ensure that reducing agricultural emissions does not compromise global food security.

Increased agricultural productivity — the ability of many countries to feed themselves — is one of the great achievements of recent decades. Constraining agricultural production would put much of the world's population at risk, and no country will do that. We must therefore maintain investment in agricultural research, so that productivity and efficiency gains can continue, but with fewer greenhouse-gas emissions. That is what the Global Alliance is all about.

New Zealand takes pride in its diversity. We are indigenous Maori; we are European; and we are the many peoples from the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere who now call New Zealand home. We are also proud to be part of the Pacific Islands Forum, the foremost regional body. For 40 years, it has been central to the region's efforts to address its own problems, be they the special development challenges of small, isolated, vulnerable island States, or halting and healing the impacts of violent conflict. It has done that in the time-honoured Pacific way, through

respectful dialogue and cooperation and then through joint action.

Three weeks ago, at the Forum's fortieth anniversary meeting in Auckland, Pacific leaders honoured that legacy by agreeing on measures aimed at converting Pacific potential into Pacific prosperity.

The themes of their discussions will resonate in other regions: strong, sustainable economic growth, protecting vulnerable populations and ensuring that they are healthy and educated and that they can have long lives.

A key focus of that meeting was the alarming incidence of non-communicable diseases, a scourge that is rapidly encircling the globe. Almost half of all New Zealand deaths relate to cancer and heart disease, but the situation is even more critical in many Pacific island countries, where diabetes in particular approaches epidemic proportions. We thank those who brought that cause here to the United Nations, particularly the countries members of the Caribbean Community.

With the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) very much in mind, Pacific Forum leaders also focused on sustainable development. Rio+20 will be an opportunity to assess the progress made since the 1992 Conference, take its agenda forward and highlight best practices. For example, New Zealand's aid programme includes energy, agriculture and tourism initiatives that promote sustainable development.

Pacific peoples were navigating their ocean, the world's largest, at a time when others were still confined to their coastal waters. New Zealand Maori call the Pacific the ocean guarded by the god Kiwa. Our region is uniquely dependent on its ocean. For those who call the Pacific home, the "green economy" is in reality a blue economy. Our ocean underpins livelihoods, food security and economic development. That is why Pacific leaders have focused on ensuring its sustainable development, management and conservation. That is why they made addressing acidification, pollution and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing urgent matters. That is why our leaders want us to work towards integrated ocean management, with our own Pacific Oceanscape framework as a very good model. And that is why they called for Rio+20 to recognize the Pacific's economic and environmental significance, and its contribution to sustainable development. At Rio+20, we will seek the support of the United Nations for that blue economy.

We work to protect the health of people and their environment, but we must also enhance collective security by advancing the disarmament agenda. Over the coming year, we must focus on the full implementation of the action plan agreed at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. As coordinator for the New Agenda Coalition, a group of non-nuclear-weapon States committed to a nuclear-weapon-free world, New Zealand will soon introduce a draft resolution highlighting the work that will be required to achieve its implementation during the coming review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We commend that draft resolution for the Assembly's consideration.

There have been gains over the past year with respect to conventional disarmament, but we have yet to see the results of those achievements. There has been pleasing progress towards an arms trade treaty, but hard work remains. Next year's Diplomatic Conference must deliver a treaty establishing the highest possible common international standards for conventional arms transfers.

We must also maintain focus on small arms and light weapons, which for many regions are their weapons of mass destruction. The year 2011 marks the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. There has been much to celebrate, including the first Open-Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the implementation of the Programme of Action, which I had the honour of chairing in May. But next year's Review Conference must work to ensure that the Programme delivers on its potential for keeping communities safe from such weapons.

To deal with all of that, we need a strong, nimble and effective United Nations, and we need a Security Council that reflects geopolitical realities — realities that have changed since 1945. Today, some States might credibly seek a fuller, longer-term Council role. New Zealand supports change that acknowledges those realities.

But most United Nations Members are not major or emerging Powers, they are small States. They too are crucial to the universality and legitimacy of the

United Nations; they too must contribute at the Council table. Let me put it simply: if we reform the Security Council to provide a fuller, longer-term role for emerging Powers, we must also ensure a role for small States. Speaking as a small State, I say that we are the United Nations. And so we agreed with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago when he said that the smallness of a country is not a deterrent to the realization of big dreams (see A/66/PV.27), and with the Prime Minister of Cape Verde, who told us that small States must have a greater voice in international decision-making (see A/66/PV.23).

There are real risks if we cannot achieve genuine Security Council reform. Emerging Powers will be denied a role consistent with their global significance, and small States will continue to be squeezed out of positions of responsibility. It is in everyone's interests that the Security Council be more representative. As we saw earlier this year with respect to Libya, the Council is an extraordinarily powerful instrument for maintaining international peace and security. But with extraordinary power comes extraordinary responsibility — responsibility that must be exercised with regard for the views of all countries, large and small.

The Council must also build on its partnerships with regional groups, such as the African Union, which increasingly plays a critical role in maintaining regional and global peace and security. Recognizing the importance of closer relations with Africa, we are encouraging New Zealand investment in and trade with Africa, supporting peace and security and providing development assistance. Last week, we increased our diplomatic engagement by appointing a dedicated ambassador to the African Union and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

New Zealand is proud of its history of active contribution right across the United Nations agenda. We have a strong record as an independent and principled voice advocating collective security and the rule of law. We take an even-handed approach to security issues, as has been shown by our voting record and our tangible contributions to peace processes. We take seriously our international responsibilities.

That is why, in 2004, we announced that we would seek a non-permanent Security Council seat for the 2015-2016 term. Nearly 20 years have passed since New Zealand's last time on the Council. The time is right for us to again bring the fresh, independent perspective of a small Asia-Pacific country to the Council. That candidature, which I confirm here today, is based on the belief that States, large and small, have a place at the Council table. Modern New Zealand was founded on a compact, a treaty-based partnership with its indigenous Maori people. That, and our diversity, means a unique history and perspective on promoting tolerance and conflict resolution; a perspective that we have previously brought, to good effect, to the Council table, and which we will bring again.

For the United Nations, 2011 has been a truly historic year. The Organization has quickly responded to change in the Middle East and North Africa. It stands ready to provide post-conflict support, and not just in Libya. It has been critical to relief in the Horn of Africa. Its essential role in State recognition has been at global centre stage. Even the most cynical, the most jaded, have had to relearn that the United Nations is at the epicentre of much that happens, and much that matters. We need the United Nations. We need it to address the woes of the world and to consolidate its successes. Its fundamental importance stems from its universality, its legitimacy and its mechanisms to confront challenges. Its effectiveness depends on its ability to adapt as those challenges emerge and on its ability to address them together. Member States, large and small, come together in that collective endeavour. New Zealand, as always, stands ready to play its part.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.30

General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

30th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 27 September 2011, 6 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

In the absence of The President, Mr. Thomson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Libran Cabactulan, chairman of the delegation of the Philippines.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): Allow me at the outset to congratulate Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on his election and to offer the Philippines' full support for his leadership in this sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Our collective experience as one United Nations has brought into focus the reality that only when nations work together in firm and determined resolve can we begin to address the many difficulties that confront us. Two global wars exposed our vulnerability to leaders and nations that do not hesitate to use violence to resolve disputes and underscored the need for an international system to govern the behaviour of States.

That is the rules-based framework that underpins everything we want to build, raise and do as one United Nations. That framework — built on our shared values and common aspirations — provides the way by which we can effectively move together as one global community towards our common objectives. For the Philippines, therefore, this session's theme — "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means" — is most relevant and opportune.

A rules-based system will work in a sustained manner only if the rules themselves are based on principles of justice and equity. Recent events across the globe, particularly in the Middle East, have shown us that individuals rise together for what they believe is just and equitable. Individuals clamour for the rule of law based on equity and fairness. When they realize the injustice of repressive and iniquitous rule, they do not hesitate to bring effective and positive change.

We must continue to work to eliminate nuclear weapons and curtail the illicit trade in conventional weapons and in small and light arms in order to preserve peace and our very existence. The successful 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons showed the collective resolve of States parties to move further forward in ridding the world of those weapons. We have already agreed to convene a conference by 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The holding of that conference will take us closer to our goal.

To build peace, we need to provide and strengthen conditions that encourage the full progress and prosperity of all nations and peoples. We must ensure that international trade and development support that end. The Philippines therefore calls for a fair, open and rules-based multilateral trading system

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and the conclusion of the Doha Round. We must likewise redouble our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The target date of 2015 is upon us and much work remains to be done.

Mr. Archondo (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Philippines is one of world's 17 mega-diverse countries and has a great stake in ensuring that global biodiversity is protected and maintained. We have been described as the epicentre of global marine biodiversity, and we host the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Center for Biodiversity. As we look forward to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development next year, we join the call for a more powerful expression of the entire world's political commitment to sustainable development.

With the human person at the core of all our efforts, we must always strive to uphold human dignity and human rights. That holds true for migrant workers. The Philippines has close to 10 million Filipinos overseas, contributing to global socio-economic development. In line with the rules-based approach, the Philippines supports the establishment of guidelines that would ensure the welfare of all migrant workers.

Additionally, we must renew our resolve to address the evils of human trafficking. The Philippines is a founding member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, an informal association of United Nations Member States that seeks to help reinvigorate and consolidate the global fight against trafficking in persons. At the core of the initiative is the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Aside from establishing rules to protect migrant workers and to prevent human trafficking, the global community needs to explore measures to more effectively assist developing countries in evacuating their nationals in instances of disaster or internal conflict. The Philippines also supports efforts at the United Nations to enhance partnerships, including with private sector actors, in strengthening the international humanitarian and emergency response system.

The Philippines recognizes that the promotion and protection of human rights are of vital importance to securing peace and socio-economic development, promoting the rule of law and strengthening democracies. The Philippines Government likewise recognizes women as agents of socio-economic growth and change, and thus strongly advocates their full participation in nation-building.

The Philippines is pleased to announce that, on 30 August, we deposited our instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This was an historic moment for my country and my people. We have stood up against the impunity of colonial rule and of a dictatorship. Now, we stand together with the rest of the world in saying "never again" to impunity in any corner of our world.

Firm in the desire to contribute to global efforts to safeguard the world against impunity, the Philippines has fielded a candidate for election to the Court, Ms. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, an experienced trial judge and international legal scholar with a distinguished and long career in public service. We ask all our partners and friends to support her candidature.

As we look to strengthen the ramparts of peace, we recognize the important role and contributions of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Philippines stands ready to do its part to ensure that the lines of peace are fortified and continuously expanded. The Philippines lauds the heightened interaction and dialogue among the Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and other key stakeholders in the global peacekeeping agenda.

As we strive to reinforce peacekeeping operations on land, so too should we continue to exert efforts in maintaining stability and security at sea. Maritime piracy, after all, imperils the lives of seafarers and disrupts global trade. Today, around 70 Filipino seafarers are still being held hostage by pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean. We must continue to work diligently to counter these sea pirates, who have no place in our modern, civilized world.

To strengthen the international rules-based regime, the Philippines advocates reforming the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to make it more resilient, relevant and responsive. The record shows that it is only the Philippines that has presented specific drafts resolutions concretely setting forth proposals on the five key issues: categories of membership, question of the veto, size of the enlarged Security Council and working methods, relationship

between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and the question of regional representation.

Terrorism continues to cast its dark shadow on all of us. The decapitation of terrorist organizations has not put an end to terrorism. We need to address the root causes and conditions that turn individuals with so much passion into beasts that know nothing but violence to achieve their ends. Among many things, we need to further examine how economic disenfranchisement, intolerance and radicalization contribute to the growth of terrorist groups.

The rule of law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is the key to finding solutions to disputes over conflicting claims in the West Philippine Sea. As we prepare to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of UNCLOS next year, let all States parties remember not just our rights, but also our obligations, for the rule of law is the bedrock on which the growth and development of our community of nations is built. Adherence to the rule of law provides stability and certainty in the conduct of relations among States. In a world defined by unequal distribution of economic, military and political resources and might, the rule of law is the great equalizer, ensuring that rights are protected and responsibilities complied with. Adherence to the rule of law prevents conflicts. In instances of dispute, particularly of a territorial nature, the rule of law ensures a peaceful settlement and resolution.

The rule of law has guided the Philippines in all its actions as a responsible member of the international community. The Philippines realizes that only when the rule of law prevails can all stakeholders and the world benefit from a region of such importance strategically and in terms of resources. We adhere to ASEAN's 1992 Manila declaration on the West Philippine Sea and the 2002 declaration on the conduct of parties in the West Philippine Sea. We call on other parties to do so as well. We also welcome the efforts and support of other stakeholders in working towards a lasting, just and peaceful solution to the conflicting claims in our region.

Allow me to conclude by saying that underpinning the success of all our efforts in the United Nations is adherence to the rule of law and a rules-based international system. Out of the horrors of war, we have resolved as one global community to build and strengthen the ramparts of peace and development. Those ramparts, strong as they may be, can easily disintegrate when even just one nation behaves contrary to the rules and norms we have all agreed to abide by. It is our obligation as individual sovereigns States and as a collective global community that all nations, large or small, behave responsibly through the adherence to the rule of law and a rules-based regime. Only then can we hope to enjoy the benefits of our world and live together in greater peace, progress and prosperity.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vince Henderson, chairman of the delegation of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Henderson (Dominica): On behalf of my delegation and the Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, and to assure him of our full cooperation. We are confident that with his skills and experience, he will bring leadership to this Assembly as it addresses the extensive and important agenda of this sixty-sixth session.

I also extend a special welcome to the newest member of this Assembly, the Republic of South Sudan, which became the 193rd Member of the United Nations in July.

I would also like to convey Dominica's appreciation to Mr. Al-Nasser's predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, for having so ably guided the proceedings of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We also express our gratitude for the continued efforts of His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and for his leadership at this most challenging time.

This meeting is being convened at a time of tremendous global insecurity. Never in the history of humankind have we had to struggle for our own existence as we have done in this past decade. We are still faced with unstable global financial markets, issues of food availability and affordability, increasing unrest in some regions and the high cost of energy, and we seem set to endure the mounting consequences of Mother Earth's response to decades of global warming.

Countries like Dominica, located in the Caribbean Sea, are again in hurricane season, a period

of high vulnerability that we in the Caribbean experience for a period of four to six months each year. Fresh in our minds are the recent unfortunate events that took place in the eastern United States. For the first time in its recorded history, the city in which we are convened came to a complete standstill because of Hurricane Irene in late August.

We in the Caribbean understand clearly the challenges faced in the aftermath of hurricanes, as these are the kinds of disasters that small island States such as Dominica are forced to routinely schedule on our calendar of events and brace for every six months. For us, each year's recovery efforts could become next year's destruction point. On behalf of my delegation, I extend my condolences to and empathize with all those who were affected by Hurricane Irene.

For reasons such as these, each year we come before this Assembly to report on the deterioration not only of the environment, but also of climate change negotiations. With full knowledge that these impacts are projected to increase over time, we believe that we can build on a number of outcomes agreed to in Cancún. We also believe that although some responses might not meet every Member State's expectation, they could act as catalysts and springboards for new approaches and new solutions in Durban.

As witnesses to environmental degradation at a time when reliance on the ecosystem to provide energy for basic needs continues to intensify, we as a people cannot continue to ignore the subject of climate change. We believe that climate change is an energy-related issue and that the provision of reliable, accessible and affordable energy and its by-products are critical to sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite unfulfilled promises and a slow start to fast-start funding, we must report on actions advanced since Cancún that have helped position the small island developing States (SIDS) to transform their energy sectors. Specifically, I refer to the SIDS Sustainable Energy Initiative, also known as SIDS DOCK.

Almost 30 SIDS have signed an agreement to establish this initiative, created by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) under the chairmanship of Grenada and in partnership with the Government of Denmark, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. We wish to thank the Government of Denmark for its significant financial contribution to operationalizing this facility and for the leadership that it has given and continues to give to the process. My delegation expresses its gratitude to the other members of AOSIS for staying the course and reaffirms Dominica's commitment to the initiative.

SIDS DOCK was the outstanding outcome for SIDS at Cancún, and, as we set our sights on Durban, the expectation is that other partners will support the initiative, which is set to transform the energy sector in SIDS. It is our hope that sufficient progress will be made in negotiating appropriate measures that might be implemented to address the losses and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including impacts related to extreme weather as well as slow-onset events.

These two initiatives are within the framework of the Bali Road Map and Action Plan and reflect actions that are geared towards the fulfilment of commitments and giving effect to the Cancún decisions.

It is no secret that the Kyoto Protocol is in serious trouble. While it represents less than 30 per cent of greenhouse-gas emissions, it remains the only legally binding global agreement in our quest to address the growing threat of climate change. In order to build on the gains made under the first commitment period, we must ensure that the broad principles secured in the Kyoto Protocol are maintained in any legally binding global agreement at Durban.

A sustainable energy sector is the foundation for sustainable development in small island States such as Dominica. For the past decade, Dominica has been working towards the development of our geothermal potential, with the assistance of international agencies and development partners.

With the support and contribution of the European Union, the Government of France and the Regional Councils of Guadeloupe and Martinique, we are now closer to the realization of our goal. Preparation for drilling has begun, and the three test wells will be complete by the end of 2011.

The development of our geothermal potential will provide us with the capacity to meet our domestic needs and supply electricity to our neighbouring islands, especially the French territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique, through our connection via submarine cables. With this displacement of hundreds of megawatts of fossil-generated power, coupled with our

sustainable development practices, Dominica's target is to be not only carbon-neutral but also carbon-negative by the year 2020.

Like Dominica, many SIDS are pursuing their own renewable-energy initiatives. However, unsustainable debt burdens and lack of technology have made such initiatives almost impossible for some SIDS. We invite other developed countries and international institutions to join the Government of Denmark in SIDS DOCK and the Government of Norway in its "Energy for all" initiative, by providing the critical support that SIDS so desperately need.

We in the SIDS are committed to playing our part; suffice it to say, however, that there are still some major obstacles impeding the pace of progress, particularly financing for SIDS-appropriate technology and transfer. As part of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) process, Dominica calls on the Secretary-General to establish a special SIDS-appropriate technology fund to address the issue of innovative financing for sustainable energy technology transfer and development for small island States. In that regard, we also ask that the Secretary-General consider appointing a goodwill ambassador tasked with advocating on behalf of SIDS and helping the Secretary-General in supporting the Fund. The effective transfer and development of SIDS-appropriate technology is essential for SIDS to build resilience to the present and future impacts of climate change.

In addition to looking forward to securing a renewed political commitment for sustainable development at Rio+20, the SIDS expect that the international community will reaffirm their support with the new and additional resources required to implement the programmes and activities agreed to, from Agenda 21 to the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

Any renewed commitments and agreements reached at Rio+20 must address the major impediments to implementing these summit outcomes, including the limited technical, financial and human resources, as well as the impact of exogenous factors, particularly the global financial crisis.

There is no denying the importance of national security to a society; thus the unregulated, non-standardized and highly dangerous trade in arms and ammunition poses great threats to law and order in our societies. The Caribbean region is not a manufacturer of arms or ammunition, yet large quantities of illegal firearms and ammunition often associated with the illegal drug trade are transferred across our borders, infiltrating our society and causing mayhem and death, overburdening our health-care system and contributing to the destabilization of economic progress and well-being. The region has lost some of its most productive members to this unregulated transfer of arms. This is an unsustainable situation for any country, but even more so for small island States.

Negotiations on an arms trade treaty are welcome, and, as stated in the Caribbean Community Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Dominica is committed to full and active participation in all efforts related to the issue of small arms. Of particular importance is the 2012 review of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the 2012 United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

In the absence of these and other initiatives to help combat global insecurity, threats to global peace and security will continue to multiply in both intensity and form. Multilateralism must take centre stage in the struggle to deal with these challenges. The work of the United Nations is therefore paramount in maintaining world peace and security. In its maintenance of this role, the United Nations must be able to clearly demonstrate legitimacy and fairness in its actions, cognizant always of the need to protect the most vulnerable.

The ability of the Security Council to adequately respond to new and changing world dynamics rests with its acceptance of the need for continuous reform to adapt to the times, including a recognition of the increase in size of the United Nations membership and global economic power shifts. Reform reflects more than representation and, in this situation, should promote adaptation to the needs of Members and the drafting of strategies that would contribute to ending wars and halting disputes.

In that regard, we welcome Mr. Al-Nasser's proposal of "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means" as the theme for the high-level debate at the opening of this session of the General Assembly.

Earlier I spoke of the threats which plague mankind in this era of globalization. I also highlighted the need for multilateralism and for cooperation between and among States. These challenges can be overcome only in a global environment where there exists respect for one another's territorial integrity, non-interference in one another's domestic affairs, respect for sovereignty and the right of self-determination. It is in this context that we again call on the United States of America to discontinue its economic blockade against the people of the Republic of Cuba.

I also welcome the support of the President of the Assembly in keeping our sister island of Haiti on the global stage. There are few words left to describe the dire misery in which our brothers and sisters in Haiti are living. The paralysis of reconstruction and development activities has been the hallmark of the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated that country in January 2010.

We recognize the tremendous challenges to the reconstruction efforts and wish to thank those countries, institutions and individuals who have contributed and continue to contribute towards this process. We again call on those who have made pledges to make good on their commitments in order to accelerate the reconstruction efforts.

The presence of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) remains critical to the reconstruction efforts by providing security and support to the people of Haiti. We therefore urge the Security Council to extend the tenure of MINUSTAH to facilitate the efforts of the new Administration of His Excellency President Michel Martelly.

We all accept that it is critical to collectively address the impact of climate change, to resolve conflicts throughout the world and to enhance peace and security for humanity. All these efforts, however, will be of little value to our peoples if we are not able to ensure that they are healthy. The United Nations has shown exemplary leadership in dealing with the fight against HIV/AIDS, together with its partners. This same leadership must now be given to the fight against non-communicable diseases.

The frightening statistics of 2008 issued by the World Health Organization, which estimated that 36 million deaths worldwide were due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), suggests that this phenomenon is not unique to any one region and therefore cannot be downplayed. NCDs pose one of the greatest challenges to the health and development of Dominica, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the rest of the world. The severe impacts of non-communicable diseases continue to place tremendous pressures on our health-care systems, productivity and already overburdened and struggling economies.

It was for these reasons that the CARICOM Heads of Government issued the Port of Spain Declaration in 2007 to promote healthy lifestyles and to combat NCDs in our region. Prior to and since the declaration, the Dominican Government has adopted a national policy on NCDs. We have further implemented a number of measures as part of our multisectoral efforts to include education; the strengthening of our primary health-care system with the contribution of our partners, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Cuba; the promotion of healthy lifestyles; greater access to treatment and free health care; and appropriate legislative and policy changes. The Government of Dominica endorses the leadership taken by the Caribbean Community in this regard. We remain committed to the well-being of every citizen.

We join our CARICOM colleagues in thanking the United Nations Member States and Secretariat for convening the successful High-level Meeting on NCDs. We look forward to the implementation of the Political Declaration (resolution 66/2) and call on the developed countries to partner with us in our various efforts to combat NCDs.

Finally, Dominica wishes to reaffirm its confidence in the United Nations system as the ultimate negotiating and deliberating body for addressing major challenges confronting the world. The Assembly can count on Dominica's commitment to working in close collaboration with the United Nations agencies and respective Member States to strengthen the mission of this body. We cannot overemphasize the fact that, notwithstanding its many limitations and imperfections, the United Nations system is critical to maintaining world peace and security and an international humanitarian system. The world today is a much better place because of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Donatus Keith St. Aimee, chairman of the delegation of Saint Lucia.

Mr. St. Aimee (Saint Lucia): Not since the prelude to the two world wars have there been so much uncertainty and anxiety within the international system. The sands are indeed shifting, as the President of the Assembly stressed at the opening of this sixty-sixth session (see A/66/PV.1).

The shifts in the struggles for freedom and the struggles for rights, some of which we in Saint Lucia take for granted; the shifts in the number of natural disasters that devastate country after country; financial meltdowns, increases in the price of energy and food, and food shortages have all converged and met at a moment when the challenge to cope weighs upon us all. However, the weight carried by a small island State bears down like an elephant on an ant, and although the ant is capable of carrying many times its own weight, it would never choose to carry an elephant.

The current world economic and financial situations are not of our making but they affect us more than anybody else. It continues to confound us how the States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), with the exception of Haiti of course — small island States like us, with limited resources, limited populations, limited land mass and small economies — can be classified as middle-income. With that classification, we are not eligible for special arrangements in finance and trade. There must be something wrong with that classification. We continue to argue that the methodology employed for such categorization puts small island developing States (SIDS) at a great disadvantage in terms of receiving favourable aid and trade packages, thereby adversely affecting our development strategies.

The continued attrition of trade preferences at the multilateral level challenges our very small — and, I reiterate, very vulnerable — economies and requires our Governments to employ creative structural arrangements and adjustments and fiscal exercises to keep our economies afloat. The present application of the terms of trade and conditions of aid are very unfavourable to us.

Emphasis therefore has to be placed on the consideration of a balanced approach to foreign investment and environmental integrity, and investors must not place undue pressure on small States. Rather, there should be an understanding of our challenges and our willingness to work in a win-win situation. Favourable mechanisms for finance and technology transfer would enable small island States to take advantage of the benefits that these offer as prerequisites for sustainable development. This is all we ask, nothing more — a chance to claim our part.

We stress our vulnerability to natural disasters and their disproportionate effect on small island economies, and we seek rapid and meaningful response mechanisms at the regional and international levels in order to enable our vulnerable economies to recover as quickly as possible. Almost every year, gains made during the first half of the year are eroded in the last quarter by weather-related phenomena.

Saint Lucia is still recovering from Hurricane Tomas, which struck the island in October 2010. Let me take this opportunity to thank those who contributed so generously to our recovery. Of course, we will still accept any generous contributions.

Saint Lucia, like other SIDS, recognizes the vital role that oceans play in national and global economic development. In light of this, the Government of Saint Lucia remains committed to ensuring the sustainable development of both coastal and marine resources.

For a number of years now, Saint Lucia has had legislation in place that speaks to effective fisheries management with laws on open and closed seasons for certain fisheries such as lobsters and, in order to prevent the capture of juvenile fish, mesh-size limits for nets and fish-trap fisheries. The Government is also targeting large pelagic fish and other species not traditionally harvested by local fishers, in order to reduce pressure on coastal and reef fishing. In addition, a number of marine reserves and marine management areas have been established, with the most well-known of these being the Soufriere Marine Management Association, which has been used to inform the establishment of other marine parks within the Caribbean and, I may add, globally.

The President took the Chair.

The Government of Saint Lucia has adopted an institutional framework for integrated coastal zone management and is working towards ensuring its successful implementation through a Caribbean coastal zone management unit and a coastal zone management advisory committee.

I dwell on the issue of oceans and seas because the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise are real to SIDS, and Saint Lucia, through a number of projects and programmes, is seeking to build the island's resilience to these impacts through the formal adoption of a national building code and the development of environmental impact, physical planning and development regulations.

Nevertheless, Saint Lucia has recognized the importance of having access to data and models at the national and local levels in defining and informing the country's response to climate change, and in this regard is taking a number of steps to build the requisite database by working with various national, regional and global organizations.

The Caribbean Sea is an important international shipping route for both tourism and trade. Considered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to be a biodiversity hotspot, the Caribbean Sea is and will remain our livelihood. It keeps us afloat, but it can also drown us if we do not manage it properly; that is what seas do. It therefore needs special attention, and our Government is promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development. We therefore support the work of the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme, and we hope that funding will be made available to that programme to enable us to achieve our goals.

For all these reasons, Saint Lucia would like to call on the international community to ensure that there is a strong focus on oceans in the preparatory negotiations for the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). We cannot forget the importance of oceans to SIDS in providing energy and food security, and to the world as a whole in regulating our climate. Oceans are a regulatory mechanism for climate.

As countries worldwide prepare for the Rio+20 Earth summit, we note that the green economy is a major theme for discussion. Renewable energy and energy efficiency are at the heart of the green economy. Petroleum giants like British Petroleum and Shell are now turning to investments in solar and wind energy. Countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Brazil have positioned themselves as strong proponents of renewable energy. Sustainable energy technologies have been and continue to be a subject of significant research and development, with very promising results.

At the policy level, a number of countries, including my own, have articulated noble and ambitious energy policies to steer us into the future. In negotiations taking place pursuant to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, climate change mitigation is inextricably linked to sustainable energy development and continues to generate much debate as State parties seek to find lasting solutions to the problem of greenhouse gas emissions.

But while the United Nations endeavours to promote equity and equality among individual countries, our capacities are not the same. Countries like ours yearn to enjoy the benefits of sustainable, renewable energy sources, but despite having significant potential for renewable energy, we have not yet been able to meaningfully develop these resources. It is therefore imperative that the international community take decisive action to assist small island States, isolated as we are, in achieving energy security through renewable energy and energy efficiency programmes. Financing is a critical element in the development of new and renewable forms of energy.

So far, SIDS have largely been overlooked, as investments are made in larger economies where greater economies of scale and profits beckon. Even with the existence of avenues such as the clean development mechanism, which should also promote sustainable energy projects, the results have not been very encouraging for SIDS. We hope that, not too long from now, that situation may change.

We applaud the efforts and resources put into the conservation and preservation of the world's forests to reverse desertification. We think, however, that considerable attention should also be given to what I term "small stands of trees" in our small island States. Although we call them forests, to those who have very large forests they are small stands of trees, but they are important to us because they are critical and crucial to soil fertility and therefore guarantee production and productivity in agriculture, thereby promoting food security and the alleviation of poverty.

Similarly, Saint Lucia welcomes the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing and is grateful to the Government of Japan for providing an implementation fund for developing

countries. We see that as a great opportunity to help our communities to benefit from their biological resources and the traditional knowledge associated with them, so that they too can play their role in the conservation of biological diversity. In accordance with the declaration of 2011-2020 as the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, we urge all countries to work closely together to conserve biological resources, for the present day and posterity.

The recently concluded High-level Meeting on non-communicable Diseases provided an opportunity to deepen relations and collaboration with Member States, regional and international agencies and development partners, and to share technical expertise, best practices and resources as we continue to strive to meet clearly defined goals and objectives. As a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which spearheaded this initiative, Saint Lucia wishes to place on record its appreciation for the commitment of all Member States, United Nations agencies, particularly the World Health Organization, and other interested groups in addressing the scourge of non-communicable diseases. We nevertheless need to set targets, implement programmes and measure success if we are to make progress beyond just another meeting.

Saint Lucia, like all of the other CARICOM member States, is grappling with security threats engendered by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and trafficking in narcotics. The associated rise in crime and violence involving the use of firearms has had a significant adverse effect on the socio-economic and human development of our countries. Saint Lucia will therefore spare no effort in working towards concluding an arms trade treaty that is legally binding, robust and comprehensive; contains the highest possible standard for the transfer of conventional arms, including small arms, light weapons and ammunition; is effective in regulating the arms trade, particularly in preventing diversion; and is universal in subscription.

Saint Lucia welcomes the Republic of South Sudan as the most recent member of our community and wishes it progress, peace and prosperity. We look forward to welcoming the State of Palestine to this body after successful negotiations have been concluded. That is our hope.

The anachronistic, half-century blockade imposed on the people of our neighbour, Cuba, suffocates that people's right to prosperity and progress. The outdated mechanism's illogical application does not fit twenty-first century geopolitics, economics or humanitarianism. We therefore add our voice to others that have spoken before us in calling for an end to this blockade and to all limitations on the rights of the Cuban people to progress and prosperity.

In the spirit of the greater good, we are pleased that, since 2009, Taiwan has been able to participate in the World Health Association (WHA), in recognition of the fact that global health issues require universal participation and cooperation to overcome those major problems that affect the peoples of every corner of the globe.

Sustainable development, like health, is one of those issues that require global participation and cooperation. Taiwan is a leading economic and technological powerhouse and can contribute substantially not only to health but to a range of global issues that face the world today. We urge the United Nations to find suitable means to permit Taiwan to participate in its specialized agencies and mechanisms, including the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change all of which have worldwide implications, along the lines of the WHA model. Surely, 25 million people living on planet Earth can contribute to this body of peoples.

In conclusion, the shifting sands are revealing an international system on the brink of change. We are at a moment when a decision taken here in this great Assembly will reverberate throughout history. Decisions taken here can create a State or divide a State; they can bring peace or bring renewed conflict. The theme for this general debate — "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means" was well chosen. Let it guide our work this year and beyond.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Carsten Staur, chairman of the delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Mr. Staur (Denmark): First of all, I would like to align myself with the statement made by the President of the European Council, Mr. Herman van Rompuy, on behalf of the European Union (see A/66/PV.15). Denmark appreciates the adoption earlier this year of

resolution 65/276, giving the European Union (EU) the opportunity to address the General Assembly at this juncture of its deliberations. The Lisbon Treaty marks a new phase of European cooperation that will benefit the United Nations as well.

The past year has once again demonstrated how quickly events can unfold and how unexpected crises can break out in different parts of the world. These include a violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire before a democratically elected president could finally take his rightful place; devastating earthquakes and tsunamis in Japan, followed by nuclear contamination; the current and still more severe humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa; and Pakistan being struck by overwhelming floods.

There have also been events of historic proportions that are still unfolding in North Africa and the Middle East. From Tunisia to Egypt, from Libya to Syria, from Bahrain to Yemen and beyond, people are demanding their rights and their freedom. They are standing up for core human aspirations and values. They want to shape their own lives, economically and politically. Theirs is a call for political participation, for freedom of speech and for the right of peaceful assembly; a call for dignity, for accountability, for justice and for jobs. It has sparked hope for a better life for the people of the region. The international community, with the United Nations in the lead, has a strong responsibility to support these historic aspirations.

The winds of change currently sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa have confirmed once again that the desire for freedom, democratic reforms and respect for human rights is universal. A few days ago, countries met under the auspices of the Secretary-General to express their admiration for the courage of the Libyan people in their struggle to take control of their own future. Denmark is proud to have supported the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people and to have contributed to the protection of the lives of Libyan civilians.

A few days ago, the Assembly welcomed the National Transitional Council (NTC) as the representative of Libya. Being here today with the NTC in the seat of Libya is tangible evidence of the progress achieved by the Libyan people in determining their own destiny. Along with the international community, Denmark continues to support the aspirations of the Libyan people. It is encouraging that the Security Council has now authorized a new United Nations Mission to support Libyan national efforts.

Developments across the Middle East and North Africa make it clear that in the twenty-first century, Governments must be politically accountable, respect people's rights and dignity, and deliver economic opportunities. The only credible response to those legitimate popular demands is sustainable political and economic reforms.

Unfortunately, we sometimes witness countries fail to live up to their responsibility and obligations as members of the international community. As we speak, events continue to unfold across the region, including in Syria. More than 2,600 people in Syria have died during the popular uprising. We strongly condemn the violence and the killings of peaceful demonstrators. It is high time to respect the right of peaceful protesters and their legitimate demands. To increase the pressure on the Syrian regime, we have adopted sanctions and hope others will join us.

Some of the prerequisites for a sustainable transition to a flourishing democracy are free, fair and transparent elections, free media, the protection of minorities, a functioning government and an independent judiciary that upholds the rule of law. Democratic change must come from within. It has to be home-grown and based on local leadership, ownership and participation. Surely, this does not exclude international assistance, including from the United Nations.

Afghanistan has come a long way since the fall of the Taliban regime. We hope that Afghanistan will take yet another step in its transition process at the upcoming Conference in Bonn in December. Moving towards 2014, the United Nations system, in close cooperation with the Afghan authorities, will also have to undertake a thorough review of its activities in Afghanistan in order to continuously maximize its contribution to good governance, anti-corruption and sustainable socio-economic development.

What we see around the world is not only a call for political reforms; it is also a call for inclusive economic development, for jobs pure and simple, and for improved standards of living. And not least, it is a call from and about youth. Governments will need to strengthen economic and social reforms, ensuring that

they generate inclusive growth and shared prosperity for all and not just for the few and already privileged.

The Millennium Development Goals have succeeded in galvanizing action, not least in health and education, and all countries have a joint obligation to ensure that the goals we agreed in 2000 will actually be fulfilled by 2015. The development challenge is pressing in sub-Saharan Africa, a region long marked by poverty and conflict, but in recent years also characterized in many countries by strong economic growth and optimism.

National ownership and clear political commitments remain the keys to success. But for many of the poorest countries, development cooperation continues to be an important tool and a catalyst in their efforts to ensure that the poorest people will also be able to enjoy the full potential of globalization. Denmark is doing its part to assist, based on a sound track record in international development cooperation. We are one of only five countries which at present fulfil the internationally agreed development goal of delivering at least 0.7 per cent of gross national product as development assistance. We would like to welcome others to this "point-seven" club.

We shall not succeed, however, without focusing in particular on countries affected by conflict or fragility. We especially look to the United Nations to coordinate efforts in those countries. That is where the United Nations can make a real difference.

The advancement of women's equality and the empowerment of women are important aspects of this process. We welcome the creation of UN-Women and look forward to working closely with that new entity in the area of gender mainstreaming. No less important is the issue of sexual and reproductive health and the rights of women.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, presents a unique opportunity to revitalize the discussion and understanding of sustainable development. Rio+20 will be an opportunity to put sustainable development at the top of the global development agenda.

Denmark welcomes the focus on green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development. Transitioning to a green economy is necessary if the world is to cope with the multiple challenges of resource scarcity, poverty eradication and climate change. Economic growth will be crucial in the decades ahead, but it will have to be green. Today, 1.4 billion people are without access to modern sources of energy. Universal access to energy will contribute to lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty.

Poland and Denmark, as part of the EU trio presidency for 2011 and 2012, are working jointly to strengthen the green growth agenda and contribute to the global objective of sustainable development, in accordance with the trio presidency programme. Next month, Denmark will host the first Global Green Growth Forum in Copenhagen. The Forum will lend new momentum to public-private cooperation on concrete initiatives that will inspire regulatory interventions, remove key barriers and identify opportunities and solutions for a renewed push to advance green growth globally.

Earlier this year, we witnessed the birth of a new State as we welcomed the 193rd Member of the United Nations. The Republic of South Sudan is the fulfilment of the democratically expressed will to self-determination by the overwhelming majority of the South Sudanese people. We congratulate the people of South Sudan on their historic achievement.

The Palestinian cause and quest for statehood are high on the agenda here in New York, and rightly so. The present regional context reminds us all, including the two parties, that direct political peace negotiations must now be resumed. Within a specific time frame, they must produce a lasting peace and an end to conflict based on the two-State solution, with both States living side by side in peace and security.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General on his appointment to a second five-year term. We have all been inspired by his tireless efforts in the field of peace and security and human rights and by his strong leadership on climate change and sustainable development. At a time when the United Nations is ever more relevant, Denmark lends its full support to the Secretary-General and to his stewardship of the Organization. The challenges we face call for international resolve and for joint action. In the Secretary-General's own words, "We need results that people can see and touch, results that change lives and make a difference" (*A/65/PV.101, p. 9*). That is why we turn to the United Nations.

That is the end of my prepared statement, but I am aware that I am the last speaker in the general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Let me therefore also take this opportunity on my own behalf — and I am sure also on behalf of speakers before me — to thank the conference service staff and the interpreters for their tireless efforts and long working days, which have facilitated this unique international debate.

The exchange of views that we have during the general debate allows each and every one of us a privileged glimpse into the positions, the values and the political priorities of all 193 Member States. The debate provides a strong and clear indication of what issues really engage Governments. It demonstrates what parts of the very broad United Nations agenda each and every Government is most preoccupied with, what their concerns are and which outcomes and solutions they seek. From this debate, we get a unique and straight look into the soul of global politics. It helps us understand each other, including when we disagree, and it informs our work together in the Assembly in the months to come.

So we may congratulate each other on a job well done, now at the end of the debate, but it is only the beginning. The true value of this debate will be seen only later, and it will depend on all of us coming together to find common ground and workable solutions.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

Several representatives have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kohona (Sri Lanka): This statement is made in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada in the general debate on 26 September (see A/66/PV.26).

The Sri Lanka delegation is deeply anguished by the remarks made by the Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. John Baird, despite our extensive efforts to keep the Canadian delegation in Geneva informed of the reasons for and background to Sri Lanka's objections to the Canadian initiative on an interactive dialogue on the lessons learned and reconciliation commission process in Sri Lanka at the March 2012 session of the Human Rights Council, including domestic mechanisms put in place. The Sri Lankan objections have been endorsed by a wide cross-section of members of the Council.

In the United Nations, an Organization comprised of 193 countries that subscribe to a range of social, economic and political philosophies, procedure and process are critically important to ensuring good governance and equity and to preventing intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations from being abused for narrow, domestic political advantage and selective application of principle. The rule-based framework of the United Nations system, which we all value, must be safeguarded for the protection of all against such abuse.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): I have asked for the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply to the statement made by the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister this morning (see A/66/PV.28). The references in that statement to Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh can be attributed only to the imagination of the speaker, who still presumes that cold war-style propaganda and repeated anti-Armenian statements at the United Nations can be an effective tool for strengthening his country's position in the ongoing efforts of the co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group to find a comprehensive — I repeat, a comprehensive — and peaceful settlement to the Nagorno Karabakh issue, and not the step-by-step solution referred to by the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister.

That statement revealed that the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, while preaching adherence to international law, has apparently taken it upon himself to single-handedly interpret — or rather, misinterpret — the United Nations Charter and statements made by the Armenian President and the Minsk Group co-chairs on the field assessment mission to the territories surrounding Nagorno Karabakh.

It is regrettable that Azerbaijan is once again misusing and misinterpreting the field assessment mission report, as it did in 2005, to justify its militaristic rhetoric and move the discussions on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict to other formats. Azerbaijan's own interpretation of the report

contradicts the explanations and recommendations presented earlier by the Minsk Group co-chairs.

The accusations contained in the statement by the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister are not only baseless and counterproductive but, more importantly, they endanger the negotiation process. First of all, none of the four Security Council resolutions on Nagorno Karabakh contains a single word on the so-called Armenian aggression. On the contrary, it was Azerbaijan that first launched a large-scale armed offensive against the civilian population of Nagorno Karabakh in response to the peaceful and constitutional expression of the will of its people to exercise their right to self-determination.

Secondly, the aforementioned resolutions do not contain a word about the withdrawal of Armenian military forces from Nagorno Karabakh. That is simply because they have never been there.

Thirdly, the defence army of Nagorno Karabkh controls only 8.5 per cent of Azerbaijani territory, which serves as a security buffer zone, as opposed to the 20 per cent quoted in the statement of Azerbaijan. Moreover, Azerbaijan itself controls 15 per cent of the territory of Nagorno Karabakh.

Finally, the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister claims that there are 1 million refugees in the country — a figure that does not correspond to any official data provided by international organizations. Such exaggerations and distortions of facts and figures undermine the work of the United Nations and other international forums, artificially delaying constructive steps to meet the needs and alleviate the suffering of the people of Nagorno Karabakh. Even if Azerbaijan is misleading its own people's public opinion by distorting facts, it cannot do so to the international community.

Armenia has always supported the settlement of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh through the exclusive use of peaceful means, and has repeatedly proven that in practice. Armenia has given a clear answer to the latest version of the basic principles proposed by the three co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group as a basis for negotiation of the settlement. If Azerbaijan is willing to agree unequivocally to it, it will be possible to see progress in the settlement process.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): I would like to exercise the right of reply to the remarks made by the representative of Armenia. Those remarks represent yet another piece of evidence that testifies to Armenia's apparent disregard of its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and also demonstrate how far that Member State is from being engaged in a constructive search for peace in the region.

It is curious that the delegation of Armenia — the country that bears primary responsibility for unleashing the war of aggression against Azerbaijan, carrying out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale, committing other heinous crimes during the conflict, and advocating an undisguised racist ideology — should attempt to criticize my country and lecture it on issues pertaining to such notions as peace, human rights, negotiations and conflict resolution.

The delegation of Armenia must be well aware that what it considers to be the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Armenian ethnic minority living in Azerbaijan has been unequivocally characterized by the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as by other authoritative international organizations, as the illegal use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and other egregious violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The illegality of the separatist entity and its structures established by Armenia on the occupied territory of Azerbaijan has been repeatedly pointed out at the international level in the most unambiguous manner.

The Government of Armenia, which has purged both the territory of its own country and the occupied areas of Azerbaijan of non-Armenians, and has thus succeeded in creating a mono-ethnic culture there, should be the last to advocate the unilateral secession of ethnic minority groups from sovereign States.

The remarks of the delegation of Armenia have not deviated from the usual speculations and misinterpretations as to the true value and content of the conflict settlement process and mediation efforts. Intensified attacks over the past month on Azerbaijani civilians and civilian objects across the front line, and an unprecedented increase in hostile statements by the Armenian leadership — full of historical falsifications and factual distortions concerning the root causes of the war and the conflict settlement process — have

confirmed the validity of our serious concerns about the destabilizing effect of Armenia's policy, and represent a direct threat to peace, security and stability in the region.

We are confident that Armenia's destructive political agenda is fated never to be realized. Armenia will be obliged to cease its provocative policy, to ensure that its occupation of Azerbaijani territory is ended, to renounce its territorial claims on neighbouring nations, and to establish civilized relations with all countries of the region. Azerbaijan sincerely believes that there is no alternative to peace, stability and mutually beneficial regional cooperation.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

I will now offer some concluding remarks on the general debate.

Statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Now that we have come to the end of the general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, permit me to express my sincere gratitude for members' participation in this open, constructive and comprehensive dialogue among world leaders.

Before making my statement, I cannot fail to express, on behalf of the General Assembly and on my own behalf, our deep sadness and shock at the death of Ms. Wangari Maathai of Kenya, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate. I offer her family and the people and Government of Kenya our sincere condolences.

This has unquestionably been a historic and memorable debate. Many Member States have acknowledged the hope we have felt as we have watched so many transformations taking place around the world whereby people have actively questioned and challenged their governing regimes. World leaders have praised the courage of those who have fought for freedom, dignity and democracy, and made it clear that Governments cannot oppress their peoples without being held accountable.

We have also welcomed new leaders who have come to this Hall to convey their countries' hopes and needs. Those leaders have called on the international community to help them fulfil the aspirations of their peoples to establish the rule of law, achieve transparency and economic prosperity, uphold justice and respect human rights. In this context, I should be remiss if I did not encourage the international community to stand united in support of the transformational process of the Libyan-led transition.

We have also witnessed the renewed hope and determination of the Palestinian people. In a truly historic moment, President Mahmoud Abbas announced that he had submitted an application to the Secretary-General for Palestine's admission to the United Nations. The Security Council is now considering the issue, and the General Assembly will follow suit if that is what Member States decide.

In general, I have been impressed by the fact that a majority of international leaders have called for a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East aimed at establishing two viable, sovereign and independent States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Building on that consensus among nations, it is my hope that at this session we will be able to mobilize our efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with the terms of reference and international law.

As we gather now to consider such complex issues, it has become clear that the role of mediation is enjoying unprecedented importance. With regard to the theme of this year's general debate "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes", many delegations have welcomed the theme and underscored the increasing importance of the role of mediation and prevention of disputes, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Member States have shared various examples of mediation efforts in their regions. They have acknowledged that mediation is a cost-effective tool and that regional and subregional organizations play a vital role in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Member States have also noted that the effective participation of women in mediation efforts is absolutely vital, and that the increased involvement of civil society is also important and needed. In addition, widespread support has been expressed for the Secretary-General's efforts in conflict prevention, and calls made for United Nations capabilities in that respect to be enhanced. As President of the General Assembly, I will give high priority to mediation in the coming year.

I have also welcomed the substantive discussions on the peaceful settlement of disputes and by the fact

that many Member States have raised issues related to the other priority areas that I have identified for this year. (see A/66/PV.1)

On United Nations reform and revitalization, we have heard many calls for continuing comprehensive reform of the United Nations so that it truly embodies the spirit of universality and can more effectively address the ever-changing global landscape. With its unique legitimacy and unparalleled convening power, the General Assembly should proactively address major and emerging global issues in a forward-looking manner.

There is broad agreement on the urgent need for early and consensual reform and expansion of the Security Council. Such reform is inevitable if the Council is to reflect our current realities and be more representative, inclusive, democratic and transparent. I would like to strongly urge Member States to revitalize that reform process, to reaffirm their commitment to the reform of the Security Council, and to generate the political will necessary to proceed in that effort in a timely manner. I believe if any process is to succeed, it must be based on the will and resolve of Member States.

With regard to the topic of improving disaster prevention and response, Member States have also emphasized the importance of international cooperation in disaster prevention and recovery. Many Member States have expressed their serious concern about the humanitarian crises plaguing the Horn of Africa. They have identified these as a major threat to stability and prosperity in the region. At this session, Member States should draft a resolution aimed at improving disaster prevention and response. This is a significant opportunity for the membership to clearly demonstrate its commitment to addressing the grave humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa. As President of the General Assembly, I am fully committed to focusing the attention of the General Assembly on that humanitarian crisis.

On the two issues of sustainable development and global prosperity, Member States have acknowledged the need to work cooperatively and to reflect creatively, in particular since the world's population will reach 7 billion inhabitants next month. A common topic that has emerged during the debate is the pressing need to rethink the global approach to sustainable development, which should include the consideration of issues such as energy, water and food security.

We have also heard repeated calls for redoubled efforts and enhanced resolve to achieve progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will provide a significant opportunity to consider new strategies for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

Many Member States have also called on the United Nations to address climate change by supporting the different countries concerned and their efforts to adapt to its effects, and for developed countries to address their emission reduction targets. The seventeenth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Durban this year, will also provide an opportunity to make progress in that respect.

With regard to the ongoing global economic and financial crisis, there has been general acknowledgement of the central role and broad legitimacy of the United Nations in providing solutions to the global challenges of governance. During the debate, many Heads of State and Government have called on the United Nations to take the leading role in reforming the world economic and financial order.

Various other important issues have also been raised during the general debate. Member States have noted the importance of providing adequate financial and human resources to the United Nations, as well as the need for shared financial responsibility and fiscal discipline. There has also been broad support for the Secretary-General's measures for United Nations reform.

Many delegations have reaffirmed that international peace and security can be best served through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Maintaining the highest nuclear safety and security standards has also been underscored. I encourage Member States to step up their efforts to revitalize the United Nations disarmament machinery and to promote negotiations on new disarmament instruments within the Conference on Disarmament.

We should now turn our attention to the next crucial step, namely, the implementation of our commitments, in particular those of the General

Assembly. That is the most important element of our work since it is the actual translation of words into deeds. I will focus, in particular, on the full and effective implementation of the relevant programmes of action adopted by the General Assembly in the interests of threatened and disadvantaged States.

On the context of our shared responsibilities, we should be eager to achieve consensus and to adopt sustainable solutions to major world challenges. I will be steadfast in my commitment to working closely with each and every member so that we may strengthen our efforts towards a united global partnership. In heeding the calls made by Member States during the general debate, I will also strive at this session to focus attention on South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as on dialogue among civilizations and advancing the culture of peace.

Permit me to end on a more personal note. As I said at the opening of this session, I consider the members of the Assembly to be my family and my friends. I will therefore rely on their full cooperation in the year ahead. I truly believe that the spirit of friendship and open dialogue that has characterized our relationship will play a vital role in implementing the agenda before us during the year.

Coming together is only the start. Working together, we will complete our task.

(*spoke in English*)

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7.50 p.m.

United Nations A/66/PV.31

General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

31st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 4 October 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 110 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/66/1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his annual report (A/66/1) to the General Assembly at its 11th plenary meeting, on 21 September.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): First of all, I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of duties as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. Japan highly respects your strong leadership during the current session and reaffirms its commitment to contribute to your work. Let me also convey to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Japan's deep appreciation for his tireless efforts in guiding the diverse activities of the United Nations and for his latest report on the work of the Organization (A/66/1).

I have distributed copies of my written statement in the Hall, so I will make my oral statement concise by focusing on the elements that I find most important.

As the Secretary-General mentioned several times in his report, this has been a year of extraordinary challenges for my country, Japan. As six months have passed since the great East Japan earthquake, Japan reiterates her sincere gratitude for the helping hands extended from all over the world. The Government of Japan has been utilizing all of its resources to restore and reconstruct the disaster-affected areas. At Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power stations, efforts are being made to move up the existing target period in order to achieve cold shutdown status by the end of the calendar year.

Although some countries are, regrettably, still imposing undue restrictions on imports from Japan, our Government will continue to provide prompt and accurate information on this matter, with maximum transparency.

Foremost among the challenges confronting the United Nations is the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In order to achieve the MDGs by the target date of 2015, the global community must demonstrate clear political will and work together with all stakeholders to deliver concrete results in the remaining period. For its part, Japan reiterates its unshaken commitment to the MDGs, focusing in particular on health and education.

With regard to human security, a significant step forward was the adoption in July 2010 of resolution 64/291, entitled "Follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome". Based on that resolution, a report of the Secretary-General will be issued during the sixty-sixth session, and Japan hopes to discuss this very important subject in the General Assembly.

United Nations peacekeeping operations represent the realization of the most fundamental principles of the Organization. Japan is eager to contribute to the United Nations Mission in South

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Sudan in the fields in which it excels. That will include dispatching Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) personnel to Mission headquarters as staff officers and possibly sending a JSDF engineering unit after necessary field study.

Japan continues to work to support and advance a seamless approach to peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Commission has the mandate to promote such an integrated strategy with the aim of disrupting the vicious circle of conflict and poverty and to fill some of the most conspicuous gaps.

The United Nations must also play a proactive role in the Middle East peace process. Japan fully understands the earnest aspirations of Palestinians to build their own nation and strongly hopes for an immediate resumption of direct negotiations between the parties. Japan calls on all concerned to refrain from any provocative actions that could impede the peace process. A complete freeze on settlement activities is essential in that connection. Japan is committed to contribute continuously to the efforts of the international community for the realization of a two-State solution.

As regards a new Libya, it is essential that the international community provide continued support. Japan commends United Nations leadership in the coordination of international assistance. Japan will support the country's nation-building efforts, utilizing its expertise and technological capacity. In that regard, Japan decided to contribute $2 million through the International Committee of the Red Cross and to support the initial release of up to $1.5 billion of frozen Libyan assets.

In our efforts to promote global peace and security, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a primary goal for all nations, including Japan. That is why Japan will again this year submit a draft resolution calling for united actions towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Our ultimate goal regarding climate change is an expeditious adoption of a new, single and comprehensive legal document that will establish a fair and effective international framework in which all major economies participate. To that end, it is important to make progress at the upcoming seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban.

International support should be seamlessly implemented beyond 2012. Japan will continue to contribute, including through the early establishment of the Green Climate Fund. Japan believes that a transition to a green economy is an effective and appropriate approach to achieve sustainable development. In that regard, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should provide the opportunity to express the determination and concrete policies necessary for the transition to a green economy.

In the area of human rights, Japan remains committed to its active role in the discussions in the General Assembly, the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council. The work and the functions of the Human Rights Council should be continuously reviewed.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women must be actively integrated into the work of the United Nations. Having seen the establishment of UN-Women in the past year, we view the current momentum as opportune for renewal of our commitment to promoting the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Comprehensive reform of the United Nations cannot be considered successful without the achievement of substantive Security Council reform. The intergovernmental negotiations held during the Assembly's sixty-fifth session provided increased momentum to that endeavour. We must accelerate the stagnated reform process with proactive commitment and a great sense of urgency. To that end, Mr. President, we are counting on your keen awareness of the need for early reform of the Security Council and your outstanding leadership to bring the process forward in a transparent manner, in order to achieve a concrete outcome during the current session.

The intractable stagnation of the world economy at present has adversely affected the financial situation of Member States. Mindful of our efforts to ensure transparent, accountable and efficient management of the United Nations, we call for rationalization of the Secretariat. Redeployment of existing resources should be the first approach in addressing newly mandated funding requirements. In the forthcoming consultations on the 2012-2013 proposed programme budget and the peacekeeping operations mission budget, utmost attention must be paid to financial discipline and cost-

effectiveness. In that regard, Japan welcomes the efforts made by the Secretary-General to reduce the level of his proposed programme budget by 3 per cent.

I close today by affirming once more Japan's willingness to participate in and firm commitment to the efforts to ensure a more effective and efficient United Nations.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the work of the Organization (A/56/1).

At present the world is undergoing major development, transformation and change. Multipolarization and economic globalization are deepening. New changes have appeared in global economic governance. At the same time, the profound impact of the international financial crisis has yet to be eliminated, and economic recovery is still faced with uncertainties. In addition, the debt crisis remains acute and bulk commodity prices continue to rise. The international security situation has become more and more complicated, and regional hot spots keep appearing. Situations in West Asia and in North Africa are still turbulent.

Over the past year, faced with multifaceted threats and challenges, the United Nations has actively promoted multilateral cooperation. It has played an important role in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), responding to natural disasters, providing humanitarian relief, deploying peacekeeping operations, facilitating post-conflict reconstruction and addressing issues related to climate change and global health. In addition, it has done a lot in areas such as safeguarding energy and food security, combating terrorism and protecting human rights.

Here I take the opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his hard and outstanding work over the past year.

The world is currently at a new critical juncture in its development efforts. Sustainable development remains an arduous task. The unevenness in North-South development is still pronounced. Achieving the MDGs is a pressing issue.

The United Nations should play a leading and central role in international development. The most urgent task is to implement the various objectives and programmes. We should pay particular attention to the special difficulties of the developing countries.

Next year the United Nations will hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil, which will have a major impact on the international environment and development agenda. China hopes that the Conference will take stock of international cooperation in those fields over the past two decades, galvanize consensus and take specific actions to promote the global cause of sustainable development.

The Conference and the preparatory process should carry forward the Rio spirit and principles of the 1992 Conference in Rio, especially the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and promote progress in the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced and coordinated fashion. At the same time, they should respect the autonomy of States in pursuit of sustainable development and pay special attention to the concerns of developing States.

Over the past few years food security has been a big challenge. The most severe drought in the past 60 years is occurring in the Horn of Africa, leading to widespread starvation. Food security has bearing not only on the economies and livelihoods of countries and their people, but also on global development and security.

The unequal balance between food supply and demand is detrimental to the realization of sustainable peace in the world and common prosperity. To safeguard food security in the world, the international community should adopt the principle of common development and take effective measures for coordination, stabilize the prices of bulk commodities such as food, and prevent excessive speculation.

The United Nations is the most universal representative and authoritative international, intergovernmental organization. It is also the platform on which to practice multilateralism. Since its founding, the United Nations has played an irreplaceable role in maintaining world peace and promoting common development.

In light of the changing international situation, China supports the conduct of necessary and reasonable reform by the United Nations so as to enhance the Organization's authority and efficiency and to respond to new challenges and threats, and thus

to better implement the obligations entrusted by the United Nations Charter. That is based on the United Nations need for self-perfection and development. It is also the common vision and expectation of its Members.

United Nations reform should be all-dimensional and multisectoral. It should also achieve good results in the field of development and give necessary guarantees, in mechanisms and resources, to promote the realization of the MDGs, so that the majority of developing countries can benefit from the reform.

This year is the fortieth anniversary of the People's Republic of China's resumption of its legitimate membership in the United Nations. Over the past 40 years China has participated comprehensively, actively and deeply in United Nations affairs. The level of cooperation between the two parties has been increasing and the areas of cooperation have been expanding, and good results have been achieved.

China has all along advocated for, and supported, the United Nations to play a central role in international affairs and has made unremitting efforts to that end. As always, China will continue to abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and support the Organization in displaying its advantages so that it will become an envoy in maintaining world peace, a pioneer for common development and an example for international cooperation.

China will continue to actively undertake its international obligations to the best of its abilities, adhere to the path of peaceful development, follow an independent and peaceful foreign policy, be committed to creating a peaceful international environment, and facilitate the common development of the world.

Mr. Srivali (Thailand): During the past few years, the world has undergone multiple crises, natural and man-made. Often, such crises have demanded collective responses, and the international community has admirably risen to the occasion. However, some crises are more complex and have defied easy solutions. Early warning, monitoring and preventive mechanisms are desirable but are not always easy to implement. The United Nations thus continues to be indispensable in setting common goals and leading the coordination of international efforts.

As its Member States, we must each play our part in supporting the work of this institution, for, as imperfect as it may be, it remains our best hope in the face of the new challenges that will surely come our way.

Thailand concurs with the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/66/1). We agree that we must find innovative ways to deal effectively with the current challenges and work together with States and non-State partners to prepare for the many tests ahead. Most importantly, Thailand commends the Secretary-General for prioritizing the need to deliver results to those most in need, and for emphasizing the need to promote sustainable development well beyond 2015, the agreed date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The demands placed on the United Nations indeed constitute a tall order, especially given resource constraints and often complex and unpredictable conditions. Nevertheless, Thailand firmly believes that the United Nations, as an indispensable institution, can and must adapt to deliver the results expected of it.

On the topic of delivering results for those most in need, I would like to share some of Thailand's views.

First, sustainable development must place people at the centre. National and community-level ownership must be promoted. Development models must go beyond aggregate numbers but be nuanced enough to take into account specific local contexts and real needs.

Secondly, in post-crisis reconstruction, international assistance should be guided by a long-term view. Domestic institutions must be strengthened so that they have the capacity to deliver services to those in need long after the international news crews and the aid workers have left the scene.

Thirdly, good governance ensures effective administration and policy implementation. Communication should be two-way, so that the people are kept well informed and are well and truly heard.

Fourthly, international cooperation — whether North-South, South-South, bilateral or triangular — is vital for the exchange of knowledge, best practices and skills. The United Nations can do much to facilitate that process, especially in the areas of disaster-risk reduction and post-disaster response.

In facing global crises, natural or man-made, the United Nations should strive to be a builder of trust, building on its unique global membership and comprehensive work agenda. Trust among nations and in the United Nations system is necessary to ensure the smooth, effective and expeditious delivery of results.

In this light, Thailand supports reform of the United Nations to strengthen its effectiveness, accountability and transparency, as well as to encourage and ensure greater participation of all Member States.

Regarding the work of the Organization, Member States should be closely consulted and kept informed on the work and initiatives of the Secretariat, United Nations mandate holders, agencies, funds and programmes on a regular basis and in a transparent manner.

Furthermore, close consultations between the United Nations country team and the Government concerned regarding the country programme will ensure that the activities of the United Nations on the ground truly reflect priority needs and that their implementation yields optimal results.

In closing, I would like to reiterate Thailand's support for the realization of the vision that the Secretary-General has outlined in his comprehensive report.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): On behalf of my delegation, allow me first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. We share many of his assessments of the current world situation and the activities of the United Nations during the past year.

However, we must ensure that the United Nations delivers. We must deliver in order to achieve the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. We must deliver to bring peace to places of conflict. And, we must deliver to promote human rights, the rule of law and democracy. It is in this context that my delegation welcomes the report before us (A/66/1), which focuses on three critical areas. I wish to take this opportunity to share some thoughts on each of those three issues.

First, in order for the United Nations to deliver results to the people, addressing development is key. The global partnership on development is of vital importance because of the fast approaching deadline of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is even more vital because of the persistent effects of the economic and financial crisis, together with high food and energy prices.

In that regard, we must continue to encourage all partners, including developed countries, international organizations and international financial institutions, to work together to ensure the achievement of MDG targets. The volatile food crisis and the impact of climate change have exacerbated the situation in Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa.

While we fully concur with the need to increase development assistance to Africa, we should also find an effective way to translate our pledges into specific and concrete programmes targeted specifically at the immediate needs of the continent.

With regard to peace and security, we must make United Nations peacekeeping missions reliable at all times and under all conditions. We must ensure availability of their equipment and other resources, as well as adequate training of personnel, so that they will be equal to the complexity of their mandated tasks.

We continue to face natural disasters that create unprecedented humanitarian challenges requiring international response. We must build a robust emergency response and disaster preparedness scheme as a long-term investment that will contribute to the achievement of humanitarian and development objectives.

We need to reaffirm that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related, and must therefore be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis.

While welcoming the commitments and various measures undertaken by Governments to reform and meet the demands of the people, we are concerned about the escalation of tension and violence. We underline the need for an inclusive and people-led political process aimed at effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations of citizens.

Secondly, in securing global goods, even with the promising progress on climate change, there is still much that has to be achieved between now and the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban later this year. What is of the most concern is the downward spiral we are witnessing in the negotiations

since the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancún in 2010. This is the most crucial year for climate change negotiations.

Public health issues constitute the major component of the MDGs, in terms of nutrition, maternal health, child health, water and sanitation, as well as HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. Furthermore, poverty alleviation and gender mainstreaming are closely linked to public health intervention.

We are remained concerned that each year, millions of women and children die of preventable causes. Consequently, we must make a decisive move together to improve the health of every woman and every child around the world.

We are further concerned about the many forms of threat to international peace and security. We are worried that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the increasing arms race cast a shadow over the stability and security of the world.

We are alarmed by continued terrorist acts around the globe. However, all measures to counter terrorism must be consistent with the rule of law and a deep and abiding respect for human rights. They must be in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

We believe that reinvigorated multilateral disarmament diplomacy with enhanced engagement by all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, could galvanize political power.

Thirdly, we can only create a stronger United Nations, if we have a reformed Organization. We must persevere in strengthening the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary organs, as well as the Human Rights Council. The Peacebuilding Commission should play a stronger role in helping countries emerging from conflict. As to the Security Council, it needs to be reformed to reflect the current world situation and to make it more representative, accountable and effective.

We are very much appreciative of the Secretary-General's effort to strengthen the Organization by overseeing a strategy to promote gender balance and by adopting various policies designed to empower and promote women in the Secretariat.

We consider system-wide coherence as an integrated process, instead of a divided one. We believe that all five relevant areas within the system-wide coherence are strongly interconnected and need to be discussed in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

We also believe that cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations are key in addressing today's global challenges. As Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), we are also ready and willing to enter into a strategic partnership with the United Nations. We will lend our efforts to develop greater cohesion and a common platform on global issues in order to pursue the goal of an ASEAN community within a global community of nations.

We acknowledge that the formulation and implementation of global policy cannot be achieved by Governments alone. The role of civil society and the business community is essential. If we want our work to achieve the goals of the United Nations, engagement and partnership with them are required.

Let me conclude on a more personal note. If we maintain a spirit of friendship and open dialogue, we will be able to advance the agenda before us at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In this respect, Mr. President, you can count on the cooperation and support of my delegation.

Mr. Nkombela (South Africa): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/66/1. I wish to refer to the following elements of the Secretary-General's report.

My delegation would like to re-emphasize the fact that development is impossible without the empowerment of women. The United Nations should put women at the centre of development so as to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations should continue to prioritize the development needs of Africa in its pursuit for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is the continent's premier framework for economic, social and political advancement. The past ten years have provided increased confidence and hope about what is achievable in Africa. The Organization's support for the efforts to achieve the successful implementation of NEPAD is therefore prudent.

My delegation commends the United Nations in its support of national authorities in the area of humanitarian assistance. We would encourage it to redouble its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the Horn of Africa, which, owing to drought, is experiencing the most severe food crisis in the world today.

South Africa will host the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban from 28 November to 9 December. The question we in the Organization need to focus on is how to deal with the issue of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. The outcome should guarantee progress and produce some sense of the legal framework vis-à-vis both the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention. That is the most pressing issue. Substantive progress is also needed on the means of implementation, especially on the set of finance-related issues, which includes the design of the Green Climate Fund and the functions of the Standing Committee, as well as sources of funding and the scale of finance.

My delegation is concerned about the continuing stalemate in the disarmament machinery of the United Nations. One of the outcomes of the first Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-I) was recognition of the need for "a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of limited size taking decisions on the basis of consensus" (resolution S-10/2, para. 120), namely, the Conference on Disarmament. In the light of the past achievements of the Conference, it is regrettable that that institution has for many years now failed to fulfil its basic mandate. As a result of the continuing deadlock, many have understandably started to question the Conference's relevance and value as a forum for pursuing disarmament goals.

Another result of SSOD-I was the establishment of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body on disarmament and subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. The Commission is also not fulfilling its mandate, and this year again failed to produce any concrete recommendations. My delegation considers this an unfortunate trend in an Organization like ours that was established with the aim of ensuring international peace and security.

It is my delegation's opinion that there can be no development without peace. In that context, we would like to stress the need for a more concerted international effort to promote peace and security, particularly in Africa. The United Nations should recognize the need to develop a strong partnership with the African Union and its subregional organizations in order to encourage an early response to disputes and emerging conflicts. It is also important that the Security Council be reformed so that it reflects global geopolitical realities. The African and Latin American continents have waited too long to gain permanent representation.

In conclusion, we thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their service to this institution.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable report on the work of the Organization (A/66/1), which reflects his clear vision and firm determination to enhance multilateralism and strengthen the role and authority of the United Nations. As this report is the Secretary-General's last report on his first term in office, and comes on the heels of his second term, I would like once again to congratulate him on the confidence of Member States that resulted in his unanimous appointment to a second term.

Over the year covered in the report, the Secretary-General has shown leadership and determination in dealing with many of the issues in the international arena, from supporting the results of the free and fair elections in Côte d'Ivoire; to backing the return to normalcy in Somalia and Afghanistan and many other parts of the world; to playing a leading role in the search for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, to name only a few. His support of Egypt after the revolution of 25 January is yet another milestone in his achievements. We thank him for his visit in March, which opened the door for much-needed support from the United Nations for the transitional Government's efforts to return life to normalcy and establish solid foundations for a democratic society that has full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and applies the rule of law.

Over the few days of the high-level segment of this session, the Secretary-General convened eight high-level meetings, on both a thematic and a country basis, setting a new record for a proactive approach that should be followed — from dealing with terrorism, to nuclear safety and security, to enhancing the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery, to human trafficking and to extensive discussions of situations in

many countries around the world. We greatly appreciate the Secretary-General's initiative in that regard.

What do we now expect from the Secretary-General in the first year of his second term? We expect full support for the establishment of a sovereign, independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, a State that is a full Member of the United Nations, in fulfilment of a long-overdue international commitment. We expect speedy progress, working along with the three depositary States of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in selecting a facilitator and a host country that enjoy the consensus of the regional countries, and to proceed energetically with convening a 2012 conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We expect redoubled attention to Africa's developmental needs and those of the least-developed countries. We expect more concerted efforts on the part of the United Nations and the international community to assist the Republic of South Sudan in building its national capacities in various fields.

We expect a proactive approach that will ensure the success of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and set in motion an active action plan towards sustainable development, based on its three pillars. We expect a successful conclusion at the coming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban that will save our planet. We expect reform of governance structures at the international level that will enhance the voice and participation of developing countries in the United Nations and enhance the Organization's role vis-à-vis other emerging structures.

We expect more attention to be paid to younger generations and their education, training and employment. We expect a strong drive towards full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and more coordinated efforts to combat terrorism and organized crime, and to deepen the roots of understanding between civilizations and religions.

The expectations are very high, and cover a wide range of issues, not all of which I can touch on here. But Egypt trusts that the Secretary-General is keeping an eye on each of them, and will spare no effort to achieve them. For him to succeed, however, we need a strong political commitment from each and every one of us to achieving those objectives and more, and to keeping the United Nations at the core of multilateralism.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I should like to take the opportunity afforded, at the start of the session, by the review of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/66/1) to once again congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. As you strive to fulfil your exciting mission, Sir, you can count on the active support of the Senegalese delegation.

All the thinking that we shared during the general debate only a few days ago calls for a new way of thinking and acting by the international community in crafting bold solutions with a view to freeing our world from the many base actions that prevent humankind from thriving. In that respect, it appears clear to us that we need to take a closer look at mediation paths so that we can, on the one hand, prevent conflicts with their always tragic consequences, and, on the other, wrestle down the exorbitant costs of peacekeeping operations. Here, emphasis should be placed on the underlying causes of crises by combating, in particular, cross-border crime, drug trafficking, the illicit flow of arms and all forms of human rights violations, while at the same time promoting good governance and democracy.

While it is undeniable that as a result of such activities the United Nations is the crucial platform in the search for solutions to existing concerns, we must recognize that, given the complexity of emerging challenges, any weakness, slowness or negligence might undermine the effectiveness of the creditable actions that we conduct.

Accordingly, we should pay particular attention to the changes that have occurred in the Middle East, which will certainly have a decisive impact on peace and stability in the region. As a universal Organization, the United Nations has the main responsibility to use its prerogatives to find optimal responses to the obstacles before us in our ongoing quest for peace. We must break through the status quo to find vital solutions for creating conditions for coexistence in peace and security between Israelis and Palestinians.

That will without a doubt require the establishment next to Israel of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, in secure and

internationally recognized borders. That is the only possible means of salvation in the region.

We welcome the determined action of the international community that has allowed our sister republic of Côte d'Ivoire to emerge, finally, from the impasse that it was in as a result of 10 years of crisis, with disastrous consequences for the entire West African subregion. Similarly, thanks to our joint efforts, the security situation in a number of African countries, particularly in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and the Sudan, has made significant progress.

But that progress must not cause us to lose sight of the tragic situation in Somalia, which deserves greater attention from us. Saving future generations from the scourge of war requires that we be determined to promote and protect human rights, as we can see in the major upheavals throughout the world. In fact, we have a common responsibility to act so that the atrocities resulting from the commission of serious crimes of violence do not recur. We must also work for the emergence of an international criminal justice that is effective, just, impartial and apolitical.

It would also be appropriate, even though satisfactory progress has been made, to ask how the United Nations intervenes in its theatres of operation and to pursue reforms already undertaken for greater effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, which should be part of peacebuilding. Without sustainable peace, all efforts at development are doomed to failure. In that respect, we should mobilize our efforts to ensure the adoption in 2012 of a robust arms trade treaty.

Today more than ever, the globalization of crises that transcend borders reminds us of the vital need for a multilateral approach, one that is more engaged and inclusive, if we wish to have a positive collective impact on the future of humankind. In truth, more than a need, it is for us an urgent necessity that we rethink and reformulate the methods and means of action that have guided us up to now.

As the Secretary-General says in his report, we are struck by the observation that our progress has been timid in our common objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. It has been clearly established that we can now succeed only if we are effective in honouring our commitments within the existing frameworks and partnerships in order to, inter alia, manage debt, promote free and equitable trade, improve the volume, quality and mechanisms for providing assistance, and facilitate access to modern technologies.

What is most important for us in Africa is re-establishing a global order where our continent would fully play the role that it should have. In that respect, the Secretary-General is correct in affirming that Africans need neither pity nor charity; what they do need are the tools that would allow them to create jobs and income. Transparency, openness, inclusion — those should be the key words of the new order that we wish to build together.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to share with you the conviction that, if we are united in one and the same movement, we will be in a better position to prevent the risks of disaster and reach a new global agreement on climate change. There can be no denying — those are the challenges and threats of the twenty-first century. Similarly, we should do everything we can to succeed in our crusade against terrorism by, among other things, getting down to adopting a global convention on that subject. The challenges are, of course, enormous, but the wager can be won if we match the complexity of the task with faith and commitment.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Secretary-General for his report, which he presented to us, as he does every year, under the symbol A/66/1. We agree with him that we are living in a time of global transition and, we would add, uncertainty. Certainly, to paraphrase the Secretary-General, the status quo is being weakened, and we are moving towards something new, the precise contours of which have not yet emerged.

Economies that were traditional leaders of the world economy are now facing serious structural problems, which tends to reduce their performance. At the same time, some emerging economies appear to be replacing the traditional leaders as the drivers of world economic growth. The gap that separates the poorest fifth of the world from the richest tenth appears to be growing, adding new reasons for the frustrations of tens of millions of persons, especially youth, who feel displaced and without a future.

In addition, over the brief time that has elapsed since the report was first circulated, short-term prospects for the world economy have worsened, in the light of the indicators from both the European Union and the United States of America. Again, just as

happened in 2008 and 2009, there is a danger that those trends will extend to the rest of the global economy.

At the same time, the displaced persons alluded to earlier have acquired a voice they never had before, thanks to the new communications technologies at their disposal. We are observing unprecedented changes in some countries, where structures of authoritarian power, carefully built over decades, are giving way to the voice of the previously displaced, who demand a better future. That constitutes a source of hope for some of us, and a threat to stability for others. Change, after all, always entails risks, but also opportunities.

There are other unprecedented phenomena. All humankind is facing a challenge whose presence was discernible for a number of decades, but which is now making itself evident with more tangible impacts. We refer to the irreversible harm we are inflicting on our common habitat, the earth, not only by preying on its natural resources, but also through the emission of greenhouse gases, which have been shown to have disastrous consequences on the environment. The abnormal number of droughts, on the one hand, and torrential floods, on the other, which have stressed to the limits the resources of the humanitarian aid that the United Nations provides, is yet another tangible manifestation of this phenomenon.

Finally, on matters of peace and security, we face a panorama that, in the best of cases, can be characterized as consisting of lights and shadows. While some progress has been achieved in the fight against terrorism, new hot spots of indiscriminate violence flare in places such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, along with a resurgence of piracy on the high seas. While we celebrate the peaceful solution of a longstanding dispute, reflected in the creation of the new State, South Sudan, new outbreaks of tension are appearing, both in Africa and in the Middle East.

This translates into a complex and packed agenda for the United Nations, in all its dimensions: maintaining peace and security, defending human rights, promoting sustainable and long-term development, providing humanitarian assistance and responding to new challenges, which range from combating transnational crime to climate change. Hence, the eternal question of whether the Organization is adequately equipped and organized to deal with such challenges, when its current structure was designed for a different world, that of the second half of the 20th century.

The report of the Secretary-General addresses all of those challenges in its first four chapters, which cover the traditional four pillars of development, peace and security, humanitarian affairs, human rights and rule of law. The report then presents a novel configuration entitled "Securing global goods", which includes climate change, global health, countering terrorism, and disarmament and non-proliferation. In each case, an attempt is made to take the measure of progress already made and the long road yet to be covered. One can agree or disagree with the assessments, but it should be recognized that the Secretary-General's presentation is nuanced and takes into account the enormous differences experienced by different countries, and the crucial importance of analyzing each case on its own merits.

The next-to-last chapter of the report addresses our own Organization, again with an analysis of progress in the matter of system-wide coherence. The creation of UN-Women is offered as a paradigmatic example of progress and reform. It is important to acknowledge the important advances that have been made in adapting the Organization to new demands. The best example lies in the significant transformations introduced in the various United Nations peacekeeping operations dispersed across the globe. Important improvements are also reported in the capacity of the Organization to deal with natural disasters.

But there are other areas, such as the reform of the three main intergovernmental bodies, and especially the Security Council, where we remain stalled after two decades of fruitless dialogue. Responsibility for the latter situation lies, of course, with our own intergovernmental forum, the General Assembly, which has not found the way to reach a consensus, for reasons that are well known.

The last chapter of the report arrives at a conclusion with which we believe that all delegations can concur: the need for the United Nations has never been greater than it is now, given the need to address the diverse requirements and demands of today's world. Here, the Secretary-General makes a clarion call for all Member States and the Secretariat to work together. Speaking for my own delegation, we answer that call in the affirmative.

Mrs. Kolontai (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Byelorussian delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/66/1). We note the constructive nature of the report with its approaches to planning the work of the Organization for the medium and long terms.

We welcome the report's content as a conceptual approach to dealing with a host of topical questions on the international agenda. First of all, the report notes measures aimed at accelerating progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, which were set forth in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2).

We support the Secretary-General's commitment to working towards the development of ideas for a framework programme for development for the post-2015 period, with concrete recommendations to be made in 2012. In this regard, we place high hopes on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro next June. Belarus is ready to play an active role in preparing for the Conference and to work on its outcome document.

Faced with the threat of a new wave of global crises, the United Nations must play a leading role in restoring the world economy. We note, in that connection, the efforts of the Organization to seek a balance between the interests of various groups of States and cooperation with middle-income countries. We are convinced that coordinated measures on the part of the United Nations to orient the operational bodies of the Organization towards a fuller and more effective response to the particular needs of this large group of countries would help improve the situation. Bearing in mind the destructive potential of the global crisis in terms of using socio-economic pretexts to stir up clashes between countries, we believe it necessary for the United Nations to focus on a systematic handling of current issues and to make as much use as possible of the entire arsenal of instruments of preventive diplomacy.

We view preventive diplomacy as one of the most effective ways of preserving peace. Belarus is unequivocally against the use of force in settling conflicts, because it often has unpredictable negative consequences and does not meet the interests of long-term stabilization. We believe that there is no alternative to a political dialogue.

In that regard, we emphasize the need to strengthen the Organization's capabilities in peace mediation, by strengthening measures aimed at preventing the initial causes of conflicts and making fuller use of opportunities afforded by regional and subregional organizations, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which are in the best position to know about the problems within their areas of responsibility. Belarus, as chair of the CSTO, is prepared to do everything it can to help here.

We share the Secretary-General's serious concern regarding the lack of noticeable progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. It is our position that the Conference on Disarmament is a unique negotiating body on questions of disarmament and international security and has global significance. In our opinion, progress in the Conference depends on the political will of the group of the world's leading States with respect to starting a negotiating process for nuclear disarmament.

Belarus supports efforts aimed at crafting a new international instrument that would help deal with key problems stemming from the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons on a global scale. To become universal, such an instrument would have to be adhered to by all States without exception; it would have to be discussed only at the United Nations, and a final decision would have to be adopted strictly on the basis of consensus. To be effective, it must be aimed at achieving concrete goals and purposes flowing from the key problems affecting the interests of all States Members of the United Nations.

International terrorism remains a significant threat to international peace and security. Recent acts of terrorism have confirmed that even socially well-off and politically stable States are vulnerable in the face of such threats. We are convinced that this evil can be eliminated only by consolidating the mutually reinforcing efforts of Governments and organizations at the regional and international levels. Important measures include completing work on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, strict compliance with the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, providing international assistance and building up the capacities of States to combat terrorism.

We would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to the need to develop global measures to

counter the use of information technologies for propagandizing violence, recruitment for terrorist groups, and popularizing or justifying terrorism. We share the position of the Secretary-General on the need to increase the effectiveness of measures designed to uphold the rule of law. We express the hope that, at the opening of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, a high-level event on the rule of law will help preserve and strengthen the existing system of international law as a deterring factor against lawlessness and legal nihilism.

With respect to the concept of responsibility to protect, we know that it needs to be clearly formulated with an exhaustive list of criteria and conditions for implementation. The concept cannot and must not be used to put pressure on sovereign States. The responsibility to protect should not condone violations of the principles of the sovereign equality of States or non-interference in their sovereign rights or the non-use of force.

The use of military force by the international community must exceptional in practice and must be carried out in strict conformity with the Charter. We believe it necessary to provide for the appropriate international legal strengthening of the principle of responsibility to protect, and mechanisms to prevent abuses must be based on strict compliance by Member States with the Charter of the United Nations and the obligatory rules of international law.

Global partnerships can serve as an important instrument in preventing crises, a concept that Belarus has been actively supporting. We are pleased to note the further strengthening of partnering relationships between the United Nations and other international organizations, groups of Member States, civil society and the private sector, for the purposes of development. We take note of the measures adopted aimed at ensuring a system-wide coherence in the United Nations.

In that regard, we welcome the beginning of the operation of the recently created gender entity, UN-Women. We express confidence that this office will provide the necessary support to States in order to improve the situation of women on the ground. We believe that among the key thrusts of the work of UN-Women should be to combat human trafficking as one of the negative phenomena that hold women back in their rights and opportunities. We hope that the agenda of this new organization, fulfilling the mandates that were initially assigned to it, will become an active member of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and will make a contribution to implementing the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons adopted by the General Assembly.

We support the Secretary-General's idea on the need to support youth and provide young people with broad opportunities to receive an education or vocational training, acquire technical skills and benefit from job placement services. Young people are the potential and driving force of any society. We welcome the recent holding, within the context of the International Year of Youth, of a high-level meeting. We hope that now work will begin on effective global policies to defend the interests of youth.

The tragedy in Fukushima confirms the need to strengthen United Nations agencies responsible for conducting scientific assessments of the consequences and effects of atomic radiation and deriving effective ways to overcome them. Belarus notes in that regard the work done by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. However, the appearance of new countries that have developed the necessary scientific potential and knowledge on the effects of atomic radiation has not been yet been reflected in the membership of the Committee. We are convinced that it would increase the effectiveness of the Committee's work if we appointed six candidate States as members during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We hope that Members States of the United Nations will do everything possible to strengthen the Committee with the advisory support of the Secretariat of the Organization and that the Assembly will take the necessary decisions to improve the performance of the Committee in the long term.

On the list of measures in the fight against climate change, we focus on realistic steps to create an effective model for cooperation, regulated by international agreements on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We have tried to make our contribution to such multilateral efforts, and we initiated the adoption of the amendment to annex B of the Kyoto Protocol establishing quantitative commitments on such emissions. The amendment will enter into force when the parties have satisfied their domestic procedures. In that regard, we ask delegations to speed up the

adoption of the necessary domestic legislation required to implement the Convention, which would thus help us follow through on international efforts to fight climate change.

An important step in that effort will be achieving a comprehensive agreement at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. We hope that the Conference will be successful and give an impetus to establishing a global mechanism under United Nations auspices that would provide access to modern energy technologies for developing and middle-income countries. The transfer of those technologies will help defend our planet from irreversible changes.

We share the opinion of the Secretary-General that a strong and unified United Nations is in the interest of its Member States. Such an Organization would be able, of course, to deal with the complex challenges we have before us. That is why the question of United Nations reform stands out as sharply as ever. Without such reform, we can never have the tools we need to prevent global crises. We call on the Secretary-General to pursue efforts in that direction. We consider our joint efforts to revitalize the work of the Assembly and to reform the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to be a priority.

Mr. Khan (India): At the outset, permit me to extend my warm felicitations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the important post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. You can count on the full cooperation and constructive support of my delegation as you steer our work over the coming year.

Less than a week has passed since our leaders assembled here in the Hall to share their perspectives and visions on the current international system. When our Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, addressed the Assembly on 24 September (see A/66/PV.22), he spelled out some of the daunting challenges that confront the international community at this time of flux and uncertainty.

Terrorism is a scourge of humankind. It is a global problem that requires global solutions. It has spared no country, region or city in the world, be it New York, London, Abuja or Mumbai, to name but a few places. I am happy that the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, which India has the honour of chairing, adopted an outcome document on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) that contains two consensus benchmarks, namely, that the international community has zero tolerance for terrorism and that no cause or grievance whatsoever can justify it. India believes that the adoption of a comprehensive convention against international terrorism would provide a solid legal basis for the fight against terrorism. In our view, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is incomplete in the absence of such a convention.

On the important issue of reforming the Security Council, negotiations during the sixty-fifth session demonstrated, without a shred of doubt, Members' strong support for expanding both the permanent and non-permanent Security Council membership categories. We welcome the decision of the President to reappoint Ambassador Zahir Tanin as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We urge Ambassador Tanin to immediately convene an informal plenary meeting to discuss Council reform.

Last year, the United Nations played a significant role in helping the people of South Sudan realize their aspirations. It was with a sense of accomplishment that India, along with the rest of the international community, welcomed that new country into our fold. The path ahead is by no means easy, but we are confident that, with adequate resolve, patience and perseverance, we can help that newborn nation as it embarks upon the task of nation-building.

This year we also have another opportunity to translate the dreams of the Palestinian people into reality. As Prime Minister Singh said to the Assembly on 24 September, we look forward to welcoming Palestine as an equal Member of the United Nations.

This month, the population of our planet is set to pass the 7 billion mark. This is not a mere statistical milestone but yet another reminder of the grinding poverty, inequality and deprivation that continue to be the fate of an unacceptably large cross-section of humankind. It also shines a spotlight on the many unfinished tasks ahead of us on the global development agenda. We have made some progress since the world community met in New York in September 2010 to review progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), although overall the picture is mixed. Our deep political commitment notwithstanding, the hard truth is that countries have done little to advance MDG 8, namely, developing a global partnership for

development. In that regard, the commitment made by developed countries to provide 0.7 per cent of gross national produce in official development assistance should be met as soon as possible. Equally significant is the need for ensuring affordable access to technology and building capacity.

Poverty reduction, gender empowerment, maternal health and infant mortality figures continue to show variable trends, with marked disparities between regions. The acute rural-urban divide in all the indicators makes the progress lopsided. What is most worrisome is that despite significant reductions in extreme poverty in the developing world, the proportion of people who go hungry has remained static. This glaring disconnect calls for renewed attention to the mechanisms governing access to food in the developing world.

We believe it is important that the United Nations system focus on the needs of the most vulnerable populations in developing countries. Sustained priority must be given to the special needs of least-developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Member States and the United Nations system must encourage timely action on the Istanbul commitments. We must also pay particular attention to Africa, in recognition of its special needs.

The focus on women's issues in the United Nations system has received a substantial boost through the transformative step that Member States took last year to create a unified gender entity, UN-Women. We are happy to note that the new entity has embarked on its important tasks with purpose and vigour, even as it settles into its new structures and mandate.

My delegation's efforts at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference will be to ensure expeditious negotiations that lead to an ambitious, balanced and fair outcome. In doing so, we should be mindful that its defining features should be the principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibility, and respective capabilities. I would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro next year, which holds great promise for the global sustainable development agenda. We must seize the opportunity to return sustainable development, as defined by the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I)), to the centre of the global development matrix.

We appreciate the efforts of the secretary-General in advocating the principles of the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law. We also recognize their synergistic link with human welfare and socio-economic development, including the achievement of the MDGs. The review of the Human Rights Council last year was a welcome development.

Peacekeeping constitutes the most visible enterprise of the United Nations. India has had the proud privilege of contributing more than 100,000 peacekeepers to peacekeeping operations in the past six decades. As one of the largest contributors of troops and resources, India is acutely conscious of the dramatic changes that have taken place in the peacekeeping landscape. We remain supportive of all the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the capability of peacekeepers to keep the peace in increasingly difficult and complex situations by taking these changed realities into account.

It is imperative to ensure that any decision on peacekeeping mandates not be isolated from equally important decisions on resources and capacity, in order to achieve the satisfactory execution of those mandates. Equally, India is conscious of the fact that peacekeeping cannot be a substitute for the tasks of nation- and peacebuilding. The Government of India is committed to the principle and practice of peacebuilding.

India attaches the highest priority to the goal of universal disarmament. We continue to be guided by the visionary action plan for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world presented by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988, which sets out a road map for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner. We further welcome the attention given to the issue of nuclear safety and security. And we support international efforts under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency to enhance levels of safety and security.

In conclusion, we look forward to forging ahead on the crucial issues before us during the current session of the General Assembly and to working towards meaningful and results-oriented outcomes.

Mr. Khair (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly. I am sure that, thanks to your wisdom and experience, the work of this session will be a success.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization this year (A/66/1). And I wish to emphasize the importance of this debate on the report. It is fortunate that, following the general debate, the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly begins its deliberations with this report, which takes stock of the Organization's work as it pertains directly to the world's hopes and expectations for achieving development and strengthening international peace and security. We face a number of international challenges and crises that call for a prompt and robust response in order to achieve security and development for the whole world.

The report is focused on the special needs of Africa. We would like to stress the importance of providing support for development in Africa. Along with the New Partnership for Africa's Development, that should be considered a top priority for the United Nations. It is also important to increase resources to Africa and to address the continent's debt problem, especially with regard to least developed countries, most of which are in Africa. We hope that such support will be coupled with support for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular in the cultural and social fields.

My country places particular importance on the implementation of the internationally agreed MDGs. We hope that the Economic and Social Council will play a leading role in monitoring and following up the commitments made in connection with the implementation of the MDGs. It is also important to take stock of the obstacles faced by developing countries in achieving the MDGs.

We had hoped that the Secretary-General's report — specifically under heading B of chapter II, entitled "Peacebuilding" — would have commended the Government of the Sudan for its commitment to peace, especially given the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which led to the declaration and establishment of South Sudan. The Sudan promptly recognized South Sudan. We therefore call on the Organization not to heed the policies of some countries that do not want to give credit to those that deserve it. We would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to the fact that the Sudanese leadership, under President Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, has enabled the people of South Sudan to realize their right to self-determination, for the sake of peace and stability in the country. My country continues to call for good neighbourly relations with the Government of South Sudan based on understanding and common interests.

In conclusion, we hope that the next report of the Secretary-General will include a plan to step up international cooperation, in particular in the areas of science and technology, given their importance in bolstering economic and socially sustainable development for our people. We hope that this will help us to benefit from the progress made at the international level on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We also hope that the work of the Organization will be based on professionalism, impartiality and neutrality, in line with the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and with a view to fostering cooperation among States at this critical juncture in world history. The Organization should distance itself from any narrow-minded agenda that seeks to target some countries on the basis of selectivity and policies based on double standards. And we hope that the Organization will soon be reformed in order to help us maintain international peace and security and achieve our development goals.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive presentation of his report (A/66/1) on the work of the Organization. In particular, we take note of the analysis and reporting on major developments and trends and the need for the reinvigoration of global cooperation under the United Nations. As rightly stated in the report, we have a collective responsibility to secure and promote global goods. Given their complexity and interrelated and wide-ranging nature, they require global cooperation of the highest order.

As we consider the symbiotic relationship between peace, security and development we are glad to see that the report first turns its attention to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs, which all countries must achieve by 2015, remain our key development objectives. However, the conditions and opportunities for achieving them are not the same for all. Against a backdrop of structural constraints and

multiple vulnerabilities, accentuated by the adverse impacts of climate change and a series of mutually exacerbating crises, least developed countries (LDCs) are likely to miss many of the important MDG targets.

For LDCs, the medium-term goal is to graduate from their status. That hinges on achieving the MDGs and on building their productive capacity, infrastructure and institutions as a development multiplier. Graduation from LDC status requires strong political will and determination on the part of LDCs and their development partners, as well as effective and robust international support measures in a sustained and predictable manner. We call for the full, timely and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The credibility of the United Nations lies in its ability to fulfil the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security as enshrined in the Charter. A continuous evolution in the external environment demands continued adjustment in the approach of the United Nations, while fundamental principles remain constant.

A holistic approach to peace and security is needed to address diverse and complex threats in the modern world. In recent years, demands have increased phenomenally for greater United Nations involvement in preventive diplomacy, crisis management, conflict resolution and the building of sustainable peace. Increased responsibility demands increased political commitment and matching resources.

Peacekeeping, which remains a flagship enterprise of the United Nations, is constantly evolving. In our view, unity of purpose among the members of the Security Council and the mobilization of its entire political capital, based on merits and principles and a coherent strategic framework with an explicit mandate, will largely determine the success of peacekeeping operations on the ground.

Equally important is the need to have an institutionalized consultative framework with troop- and police-contributing countries and the provision of adequate human and material resources. The safety, security and motivation of peacekeepers should form an integral part of a successful peacekeeping mission. We remain steadfast in our commitment to contributing to peacekeeping.

We underscore the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission. The consolidation of national ownership and capacity-building and strong support for economic regeneration and youth employment, together with stabilization of the security situation and coherence and effective coordination among all stakeholders, are some of the defining features of successful peacebuilding efforts.

Conflicts, natural disasters, poverty, hunger and multiple crises have aggravated humanitarian challenges worldwide. We call for greater United Nations capacity, both in terms of resources and manpower. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations to further improve needs-based joint planning efforts. We call for United Nations assistance in developing streamlined and effective disaster risk reduction strategies to minimize people's exposure to natural hazards, especially in LDCs.

Nepal's commitment to human rights is unequivocal. Peace, development and human rights must be pursued in a coherent and holistic manner. The right to development must form an integral part of the global human rights agenda.

Global warming has frequently led to erratic and extreme weather, affecting human health, ecosystems and biodiversity. My country, which is both a least developed and landlocked country, is highly vulnerable to climate change, which has precipitated the melting of snow in the Nepalese Himalayas — the perennial source of freshwater for over 1 billion people in South Asia. Approximately two dozen of our glacial lakes could overflow their banks at any time, causing a huge loss in lives and property. That is why we have launched the initiative to promote a sustainable mountain development agenda, with a view to highlighting their special vulnerabilities and fragilities.

We are deeply worried by the lack of progress on climate talks. We call for ambitious goals, with due regard for the equitable aspects of climate change. Nepal attaches high importance to the Rio+20 Conference on sustainable development, to be held next year. The Conference will be an important occasion to collectively advance the sustainable development agenda, with a central focus on human well-being, while taking into account the vulnerabilities of LDCs.

Nepal calls for the general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction in a

time-bound manner. The Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific, located in Kathmandu, could be instrumental in revitalizing the Kathmandu process to facilitate dialogues and deliberations on confidence-building in the region.

Terrorism must be defeated in all its forms and manifestations. The early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism is critical to strengthening global partnership and to collaboration in fighting that deadly menace.

The global health agenda must receive continued priority. It is also important that the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262) and the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (resolution 66/2, annex), which was held just a few days ago, be implemented with priority, fully ensuring the resource requirements of developing countries, in particular of LDCs.

We must ensure that the power and authority of the General Assembly are enhanced commensurate with its standing as the only universally representative body.

Nepal supports the expansion of the membership of the Security Council in both categories. The reform agenda must address all interrelated issues, such as representation, as well as transparency and accountability in the working methods of the Security Council. The role and contribution of smaller States in the maintenance of international peace and security should also be duly acknowledged.

The Economic and Social Council must take a leading role in ensuring coherence and consistency in global economic, financial and trading systems and in promoting global economic relations, in close cooperation with the Bretton Woods and other relevant institutions. The United Nations has a crucial role in shaping the policy debate on, and establishing global norms in, economic and financial matters, which must be strengthened. Nepal welcomes all efforts aimed at promoting system-wide coherence, including the operationalization of UN-Women.

In conclusion, Nepal's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter is profound and resolute. For us, the United Nations represents a solid manifestation of multilateralism. Despite tumultuous developments over the years, the United Nations has preserved its standing as a centrepiece of international relations. As the world becomes more integrated and the problems facing humankind become more complex and diverse, the United Nations remains a pivotal and indispensable organization for us all.

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique): As this is the first time that I take the floor at the General Assembly, allow me to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and all the members of the Bureau on your unanimous election to preside over the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We would also like to take this opportunity to express the full support of the delegation of Mozambique as you discharge of your noble mission and responsibilities.

The delegation of Mozambique welcomes this year's annual report (A/66/1), a document that highlights the main achievements of the past session, the challenges that the Organization had to overcome and, above all, the remaining commitments to be met. In that regard, it constitutes an important guide for the work ahead. We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report and all United Nations staff for the positive results, which could be achieved only with their dedicated engagement and commitment to deliver on the work of the Organization.

In the past five years, we have witnessed a fast-changing world, marked by the prevailing combined effects of various crises and aggravated by the magnitude and frequency of natural disasters, to mention just one. In that challenging environment, the United Nations has shown its ability to adapt and transform itself to cope with new and complex realities. Today, the Organization remains our source of strength and inspiration, as it is under its umbrella that we congregate to strive to foster inclusive and sustainable responses to new and old challenges alike. The report has several examples of that resilience, from responses to threats to peace and security to those taken in the context of humanitarian disasters.

We note with satisfaction that the United Nations has strengthened its partnership with regional and subregional organizations, an important step in improving early warning mechanisms, conflict prevention and crisis management. As underlined by His Excellency President Armando Guebuza in his statement during the general debate,

> "We reaffirm our recognition of the role of the regional and subregional organizations as pillars in the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability". (*A/66/PV.13, p. 9*)

We note with concern that, four years before the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the Secretary-General has once again reiterated the call made last year for the necessary financial resources to be made available if we are to succeed in achieving the targets to which we committed ourselves. The situation is even graver in Africa, a continent where the total number of people living in extreme poverty and facing food insecurity continues to rise due to a sharp increase in food and energy prices in 2011. In addition, the economic performance of several African countries is not being complemented by the disbursement of the additional financial support pledged by development partners, including that promised six years ago at the Group of 20 Summit at Gleneagles.

In that regard, we await with expectation the proposed recommendations for a post-2015 development framework, as well as the outcome of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, as they will outline our future path to equitable and sustainable development. It is vital that, as we approach 2015, the international community reaffirm its commitment to an inclusive global development agenda that caters for the needs of every Member State, from the least developed countries to the most developed ones. We should work together to ensure that the next framework sustains and consolidates the gains made so far, reinforces the commitments to overcome the shortfalls, and identifies ways to tackle the new challenges before us.

The recent social uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East bear testimony to the vulnerability of peace and stability in the absence of adequate satisfaction of basic human needs and rights. We salute the United Nations for its timely involvement in fostering dialogue and in supporting the authorities of the affected countries as they endeavour to respond to the needs of their people in an emergency situation.

As those countries return to normalcy, the role of the United Nations continues to be of paramount importance in helping to build democratic institutions and respond to the social needs of the people. Our experience of transition from conflict to peace shows that an impartial and credible partner, such as the United Nations, is critical in building confidence and fostering dialogue among the various national stakeholders. The United Nations also plays a critical role by making appropriate expertise available in various relevant domains that we all recognize.

In efforts to support the ongoing transition processes, the role of the international community cannot be overemphasized. In that regard, we applaud the political decision to establish the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

As one of the eight pilot countries working on the Delivering as One initiative since 2007, Mozambique follows with particular interest the activities of the Organization to reinforce system-wide coherence at all levels. We therefore welcome the progress made in that regard, including activities related to the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Harmonization of Business Practices in the United Nations System. It is worth noting that, in its country-led evaluation of Delivering as One, Mozambique identified among the challenges the need to fast-track the strategic consolidation of the delivering as one experience by decentralizing roles and responsibilities between United Nations Headquarters and country offices, and the need to move forward with streamlining and harmonization among United Nations agencies at the country and Headquarters levels.

Mozambique has made significant progress in leading a partnership with the United Nations system that is much more coherent in its support to national poverty reduction plans and strategies. For example, the Government has just signed a new multi-year United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2012-2015 which, for the first time, brings together all United Nations activities in the country into a common framework that is fully aligned with our poverty reduction strategy paper. The implementation of the new UNDAF will focus on building on the lessons drawn from delivering as one and moving even further towards system-wide coherence in the coming years.

In that regard, Mozambique is pleased to see that the Secretary-General's report acknowledges some of those lessons, such as the importance of strong Government leadership, the importance of strong United Nations system-wide leadership and coordination at country level and the need to reinforce

the common funding programming systems to avoid competition and fragmentation.

Mozambique has paid particular attention to achieving tangible poverty reduction results as a hallmark of the Government's poverty reduction programmes. We are therefore pleased that the new UNDAF anchors that same vision for the next generation of delivering as one. Good examples are already visible and having an impact in the areas of nutrition, social protection and climate change adaptation, where joint United Nations programmes in support of Government goals has meant more effective support and results.

Mozambique is of the view that there is no turning back on the accelerated United Nations reform process at the country level. We look forward to actively contributing to these and other lessons learned during the ongoing independent evaluation of Delivering as One and at the intergovernmental meeting of the programme country pilots, to be held in Uruguay in November.

Finally, we would like to reaffirm the continued engagement and commitment of Mozambique in support of United Nations work to deliver on the five imperatives highlighted by the Secretary-General in his opening statement (see A/66/PV.11) at the current session: sustainable development, prevention, building a safer and more secure world, supporting nations in transition and empowering women and youth. Together, no challenge is too large; together, nothing is impossible.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which is contained in document A/66/1?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 110.

The meeting rose at 12:05 p.m.